

GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



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WELCOME

Hello, Georgia Cyber Academy Team!

If you are new to Georgia Cyber Academy, welcome to the family! We are excited to have you as part of our growing organization. And for returning staff, I cannot thank you enough for your unwavering commitment to our work. It is, without question, the talent and dedication of our staff that drives the impact we have on our students and the community. We are building one of the strongest groups of educators in Georgia, and I know we will accomplish truly great things this year and beyond.

Georgia Cyber Academy is committed to re-imagining education in an effort to better serve our enrolled students and families. That means creating a school culture that is passionate, flexible, patient, innovative, strong, fearless, hard-working, and above all, 100% committed to excellence. We serve students from 181 school districts and each of the 159 Georgia counties, providing a full complement of all services and educational pathways available to Georgia public school students.

Strength, perseverance, and fortitude make up the Georgia Cyber Academy school community. Our staff has always served as the tangible expression of our values: you build strong bridges to our families and students; you execute with integrity every day; and your belief and commitment are the foundation of our work.

We want this role to be the most satisfying experience of your professional life, and I hope that you enjoy being part of a dynamic, mission-driven organization that is doing some of the most critical work in Georgia today.

Wishing you a wonderful and impactful year.

With gratitude,

Michael Kooi
Superintendent

GENERAL EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

All Georgia Cyber Academy (GCA) employees are at-will. The policies in this handbook are to be considered guidelines. GCA policies and procedures included in this handbook do not constitute a contract of employment, nor do they promise continued employment. Georgia Cyber Academy reserves the legal right to recruit, select, direct, discipline, and discharge employees and exercise full discretion over the organization's policies, procedures, and performance of work. Georgia Cyber Academy, at its discretion, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue any part or parts of the policies in this manual at any time without prior notice. Should any changes occur, GCA will do its best to communicate those changes to all employees in a timely manner.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This GCA Employee Handbook is designed to communicate GCA's major policies and procedures. This document is current as of the date noted in the lower left-hand corner of the cover page. The most current version of GCA's Employee Handbook can be found in PDF format on the ADP website as well as the staff portal. No handbook can include or anticipate every issue, question, or concern that may arise. Each employee is required to be knowledgeable about the policies and regulations of GCA and implement them in a spirit of good faith. When in doubt, please ask before you make a decision that could violate a law or policy and endanger your employment with GCA. The contents of this handbook are intended to provide a brief overview of the most commonly referenced policies—it may not include every piece of information you need to know. Georgia Cyber Academy reserves the right to revise, expand, or discontinue this information at any time. If there is a conflict between the information in this handbook and any law, rule, policy, or regulation of the United States, the state of Georgia, the Georgia Board of Education, or GCA, the law, rule, policy, or regulation is the controlling authority.

Definitions

The term "GCA" as used throughout this handbook is an acronym for Georgia Cyber Academy

The term "employee" as used throughout this handbook means the employees of GCA

The term "employment" used throughout this handbook means your employment with GCA

GCA strives to maintain a positive work environment where employees respect the personal rights and property of fellow employees and meet reasonable standards of work performance. Employees are expected to be courteous and professional to fellow employees, clients, vendors, visitors, and anyone else with whom they come in contact while conducting business. GCA may, at its sole discretion, take any appropriate corrective action up to and including immediate termination of employment, depending on the circumstances of the situation.

Safe Harbor Policy

Georgia Cyber Academy makes all good faith efforts to comply with all applicable laws, as enacted and as revised. Any existing applicable law and any enacted legislation will automatically become a policy of GCA as applicable. Any existing policies that are contrary to the law will automatically be without effect. Any employee who feels that a policy of GCA is contrary to the law may bring such a matter to the attention of Human Resources and/or the Superintendent for further review.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Equal Employment Opportunity

GCA provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, genetic information, citizenship status, age, pregnancy, handicap or disability, gender (including gender identity or expression), sexual orientation, marital status, civil union, or registered domestic partner status, military status or status as a veteran, or bankruptcy in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. In addition, GCA complies with applicable federal, state, and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, pay, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, benefits, and training.

We value a diverse workforce. Any employee who believes they have been discriminated against should refer to the Anti-Harassment and Discrimination policies below.

Religious Accommodations Policy

GCA complies with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and all applicable state and local fair employment practices laws and is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all individuals, regardless of their religious beliefs and practices or lack thereof. Consistent with this commitment, GCA will provide a reasonable accommodation of an applicant's or employees sincerely held religious belief if the accommodation would resolve a conflict between the individual's religious beliefs or practices and a work requirement, unless doing so would create an undue hardship for GCA.

If you believe you need an accommodation because of your religious beliefs or practices or lack thereof, you should request an accommodation from Human Resources. You may make the request orally or in writing. GCA encourages employees to make their request in writing to include relevant information, such as: A description of the accommodation you are requesting, the reason you need an accommodation, how the accommodation will help resolve the conflict between your religious beliefs or practices or lack thereof and one or more of your work requirements.

After receiving your oral or written request, GCA will engage in a dialogue with you to explore potential accommodations that could resolve the conflict between your religious beliefs and practices and one or more of your work requirements. GCA encourages you to suggest specific reasonable accommodations that you believe would resolve any such conflict. However, GCA is not required to make the specific accommodation requested by you and may provide an alternative, effective accommodation, to the extent any accommodation can be made without imposing an undue hardship on GCA.

GCA may ask you to provide additional information about your religious practices or beliefs and the accommodation requested. If you fail to provide the requested information, your request for an accommodation may be denied. GCA makes determinations about religious accommodations on a case-by-case basis considering various factors and based on an individualized assessment in each situation.

GCA strives to make determinations on religious accommodation requests expeditiously, and will inform the individual once a determination has been made. If you have any questions about an accommodation request you made, please contact Human Resources.

Individuals will not be retaliated against for requesting an accommodation in good faith. GCA expressly prohibits any form of discipline, reprisal, intimidation, or retaliation against any individual for requesting an accommodation in good faith.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended by the ADA Amendments Act, requires an employer to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities unless it would cause undue hardship. A reasonable accommodation may include a change in the work environment or in the way a job is performed that enables a person with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job or, for applicants, to be considered for the job.

If you require an accommodation, you must inform Human Resources of the need for an accommodation and engage in an interactive process regarding such accommodation. You may make the request orally or in writing. GCA encourages employees to make their request in writing and to include relevant information, such as: a description of the accommodation you are requesting, the reason you need an accommodation, how the accommodation will help you perform the essential functions of your job.

If your disability or need for accommodation is not obvious, GCA may request supporting medical documentation from the individual's health provider in order to verify the disability and the precise nature of the limitations as well as to ensure you can safely perform the essential functions of your job with the accommodations. We may also ask you to submit to an independent medical or other appropriate examination, at our expense, to help us assess your needs.

Human Resources will respond promptly to any request for accommodation. Any employee who is unable to resolve the issue of a reasonable accommodation may bring that issue to the Superintendent, and then to the Board of Directors.

Americans with Disabilities, Disabled Veterans, and Veterans of the Vietnam Era Affirmative Action Policy

It is GCA's policy to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified disabled veterans, veterans of the Vietnam Era, and individuals with disabilities. This policy applies to all employment actions including, but not limited to, advertising, recruitment, hiring, compensation, retention, training, demotion, promotion or transfer, layoff, reduction in force (RIF), termination or tenure.

Persons wishing to self-identify as an individual with a disability, disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam Era should contact Human Resources. An individual wanting additional information or to file a complaint should contact the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office. [Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

Background Check & Fingerprinting Policy

Georgia Cyber Academy carefully selects quality employees. Background checks and fingerprinting help to ensure new employees have the skills for the job and have performed well in the past. GCA conducts background checks and fingerprints on all job candidates after a contingent offer of employment has been extended. GCA will consider job duties, among other factors, in determining what constitutes satisfactory completion of the background check. Financial background checks may be collected for finance department personnel, all employees assigned a GCA credit card, personnel responsible for handling funds, and personnel with budget and/or expense reimbursement sign off. A background check and/or fingerprint may also be required during reassignment, internal transfer, promotion, or certificate renewal of an employee. An updated background and/

fingerprint may be requested periodically if an employee remains in the same position for more than five (5) consecutive years. A third-party administrator may be used to conduct the background checks/fingerprints, and all background checks/fingerprints will be compliant with applicable laws.

The information that may be collected includes, but is not limited to:

- Criminal background
- Financial history
- Employment history
- Education
- Licensure

Checking professional and personal references is an important part of the background check/fingerprint process. Information obtained from the background check/fingerprint process, including information from professional and personal references, will be used by GCA solely for employment purposes.

Immigration Law Compliance

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of your right to work in the United States. On your first day of work, you will be asked to provide original documents verifying your right to work and as required by federal law, to sign Federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form. If at any time you cannot verify your right to work in the United States, GCA may be obligated to terminate your employment.

Certifications

All teacher positions require that you maintain specific certifications as a condition of your employment. It is the responsibility of each employee who holds Certification to keep it in good standing, renew when needed, and to hold a clearance certification. It is the teacher's responsibility to attend, at teacher's expense, all necessary classes and/or workshops to maintain the teacher's instructional credentials.

Teachers must agree to comply with all certification requirements, as set forth by GCA and Georgia Statutes. Any teacher who has been granted a waiver agrees to complete all credits required for certification in the subject area within the time frame specified by Human Resources. The teacher further agrees to provide GCA, in a timely manner, with written verification of her/his compliance with said requirements.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Previous teaching experience presented after October 1st will be issued for the following school year.

Employment Verification

All employment verification or reference requests for current or former employees are to be referred to Human Resources. The Human Resource Department customarily releases only the last title and dates of employment.

Requests for employment verification for credit or mortgage purposes should also be referred to Human Resources. Certain information will be provided only if Human Resources has obtained permission by the employee to release this information.

Residency

Typically, all GCA employees reside in the state of Georgia or within 45 miles of the Georgia border and are expected to perform their job duties from such residence unless otherwise stated in their job description or directed otherwise by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

However, employees who find themselves in a position where they must relocate, either temporarily or permanently, or perform their job duties outside of Georgia or beyond 45 miles of the Georgia border must discuss this IMMEDIATELY with their supervisor, who will review the situation with Human Resources and the Superintendent for a final decision. Employees relocating to a residence outside the state of Georgia must fill out the Out of State Residence Agreement and have it signed by the Superintendent BEFORE moving out of the state.

Out of state allowances may be made for candidates that are considering a position with GCA especially in cases where the Superintendent and Hiring Manager deem a position to be hard to fill and looking outside the state allows for more qualified candidates.

In cases where employment is offered to employees who reside or relocate outside the borders of Georgia the employee must sign an agreement that provides for them returning to Georgia for all mandatory in-person events and activities such as certification, fingerprinting, professional development, training, testing administration periods, EOY and BOY events, monitoring visits/audits, and any other mandatory activities at their own expense. Further, employment in other states will not be considered if additional wages, benefits, taxes, or fees are required to be paid due to the employee residing in another state.

All GCA employees are expected to adhere to the policies within GCA Business Travel and Other Expense Reporting Policies and the Critical Days Policy, including but not limited to any required travel to in-person events such as outings, professional development, and state testing.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

We reserve the right to clarify or change these terms at any time and intend to communicate any changes prior to their effective date.

New Employee Orientation & Training

To assist each new hire in becoming familiar with GCA, GCA will provide orientation and training sessions. Some of the content of the sessions will depend on the nature of your responsibilities, while other parts will be applicable to all employees. There may be a required in-person component to new employee training and orientation that can be from one to three days depending on the position accepted. Virtual orientation and training sessions require that the employee be on camera, paying attention to the content being related, and participating for the duration of the new employee orientation and training online sessions. Failure to attend and complete these new employee training and orientation sessions, in-person and virtual, as scheduled may result in a delay of start date and/or immediate dismissal.

Ninety (90) Day Probation Period

The Ninety (90) Day Probationary Period is intended to give new employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether they can meet the expectation of the new position. GCA uses this period to evaluate employee capabilities, skills, productivity, classroom

management skills, work habits, and overall performance. GCA reserves the right to terminate employment with all new and rehires due to performance during the ninety (90) day probationary period.

All rehired employees work on a mandatory probationary period for the first ninety (90) calendar days after their date of hire. Employees who are promoted or apply and are approved for transfer within GCA must complete a secondary probationary period of the same length with each reassignment to a new position. Any transfer is subject to position availability and at the sole discretion of the Superintendent.

In cases of promotions or transfers within GCA, an employee who, in the sole judgment of management, Human Resources, and the Superintendent, is not successful in the new position can be removed from that position at any time during the probationary period.

During the probationary period, new employees are eligible for those benefits that are required by law, such as workers' compensation insurance. Employees will be eligible for health insurance benefits thirty (30) days after employment, subject to the terms and conditions of each benefits program. Short-term and long-term disability are not available until six (6) months after initial employment. Employees should read the information for each specific benefits program for the details on eligibility requirements.

Benefits eligibility and employment status are not changed during the secondary introductory period that results from a promotion or internal transfer. Salary and vacation/summer break will be changed and prorated, if necessary, to be consistent with the new position that was accepted. Promotions and internal transfers that take place after December and result in immediate salary increases may result in that employee being ineligible for salary increases for the next twelve (12) months.

Internal Transfers

Every GCA employee should be thinking about his or her career goals and objectives. Employees may apply for any open position that is posted. To apply for a job internally, the following conditions apply:

- Must be in "good standing" for at least the past 180 consecutive days. Good standing means completing assignments on time, performing work in at least a satisfactory manner, and having a positive effect on the workplace, students, and staff.
- Must not currently be on a written warning or Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).
- Managers should be aware of the employee's interest in transferring.

NOTE: Employee must notify his/her immediate supervisor if selected to interview with the hiring manager. Interviews WILL NOT be conducted until his/her immediate supervisor is aware that the employee has applied for an open position.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Internal transfers may result in reductions or increases in pay and changes in vacation/summer break depending on the role accepted to be consistent with the pay scale and break time for their new role.

The best candidate will be selected. If it is an internal candidate, a change memo will be generated to reflect the transfer once an agreed-upon start date has been decided. The hiring manager must consult with the current manager to determine the best start date to meet the needs of both departments. Best practice is for the internal transfer to be completed within 2-3 weeks. However, selected candidates that are originally in instructional positions will not be allowed to transfer during second semester until after the Spring Testing window has been completed.

Occasionally, GCA will reorganize/restructure a department or determine additional human resources are needed for a particular job function necessitating that more human resources are reallocated to a role or department.

Cross training and performing additional/alternate duties for another position or department temporarily during peak operational times does not constitute an internal transfer and requires no contractual addendum or agreement.

Reorganization/restructuring most often occurs effective July 1st and coincides with a new contractual period, but at times this will happen during GCA year that is in progress. As part of reorganization or restructuring, a job title may be eliminated. In these cases, the employee may be moved to another role and/or department for the remainder of their existing one (1) year contract with no change in pay, benefits, or vacation/summer break time, unless an increase is warranted due to the established salary range for the given position.

Employees may be moved at any time during their current contract to another position, department, or job function due to GCA's operational needs provided that pay, benefits, and vacation or summer break time are not altered for the remainder of their existing one (1) year contract.

An addendum to the employee's existing contract may be required if the operational need- based internal transfer resulted in a change in department or title. An addendum to the employee's existing contract may not be required if only the specific duties assigned to the employee change, but not the employee's title or department. For example, a teacher moving from one grade level to another or spanning a grade level provided that the grade band served and/or department did not change. If an employee does not want to move to their new assigned department and/or position, they may resign or apply for any open position that is available. It is not guaranteed that they will be offered the position for which they applied. If the employee chooses to resign in this situation, they will be paid and maintain benefits through the end of the month provided they sign a separation agreement.

For any GCA annual contracts that may be offered in subsequent or future years, the employee's pay, benefits, and vacation/summer break will change to be consistent with the position, duties, and department that they have been moved to. This may result in a pay, benefits, and summer break/vacation increase or decrease in the new contract that they are offered.

Administrative Internal Transfers occasionally occurs when it is determined that an employee is better suited to a different role or has the skill sets that best fulfil a newly created department, position, or job function within GCA.

Personnel transfers most often occur effective July 1st and coincide with a new contractual period, but at times this will happen during GCA year that is in progress. In these cases, the employee will be moved to another role and/or department for the remainder of their existing one (1) year contract with no change in pay, benefits, or vacation/summer break time, unless an increase is warranted due to the established salary range for the new position or role that they will be fulfilling.

Employees may be moved at any time during their current contract to another position, department, or job function due to GCA's determination that they are better suited to a different role and/or a newly created position/department provided that pay, benefits, and vacation/summer break time are not altered for the remainder of their existing one (1) year contract.

Volunteer Work Prohibition

All non-exempt employees are prohibited from volunteering or being asked to volunteer to do extra work if payment would otherwise be required to get the work accomplished. An employee may volunteer and not receive additional compensation if and only if the employee: performs hours of service for a public agency for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without expectation of compensation; offers services freely and without pressure or coercion; and is not otherwise employed by the same school district to perform the same type of services as those for which the individual proposes to volunteer. Therefore, for example, principals cannot ask a non-exempt employee to “volunteer” a day and to perform duties for which they would usually be compensated.

Any employee who is asked to “volunteer” in violation of this policy should immediately report the policy violation to Human Resources.

Outside Employment (2nd Job)

Employees may in some cases need or wish to hold additional jobs. Employees must disclose any jobs at the time of each new contract by notifying GCA Human Resources in writing. GCA reserves the right to rescind an offer of employment if it believes that the additional job disclosed presents a conflict of interest and/or it is thought that it will interfere with an employee’s ability to fully perform the duties of the role for which they are being hired.

If additional employment is sought after an employment contract has been signed and accepted, employees must notify Human Resources and the Superintendent for approval prior to engaging in any type of outside employment. Outside employment will not be permitted if it interferes or conflicts with the interests of GCA.

All absences related to the employee’s other employment, including but not limited to injuries, must comply with GCA’s Time Off Policy. Employees will not be provided with additional time off or compensation. Employees may not use GCA property including, but not limited to, computers, phones, printers, online platforms, and contacts, for outside employment, including self-employment.

Should outside employment be approved, any changes to that outside employment must be brought to the attention of Human Resources and the Superintendent. GCA and Human Resources reserves the right to inquire about outside employment of all its employees, at a minimum, on an annualized basis.

All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements. If it is determined that an employee’s outside work conflicts or interferes with performance, safety, or their ability to meet the requirements of GCA as modified from time to time, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment to remain with GCA.

Employees also may not receive any income or material gain from any individual or entity for materials produced or services rendered while performing their jobs with GCA.

Employment of Relatives

GCA permits the employment of qualified relatives of employees so long as such employment does not, in the opinion of GCA, create actual or perceived conflicts of interest. For purposes of this policy, “relative” is any of the following relationships by blood, adoption, marriage (including common law marriage), civil union, or domestic partnership (whether by law, or receiving employment benefits), spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, first cousin, or corresponding in- law or “step” relation, and individuals involved in a romantic relationship.

Relatives may not work together in direct reporting relationships. This includes any situation where one relative may be providing feedback, coaching, mentoring, and/or evaluation of another relative. Should relatives, as

defined in this section, fall under the same reporting line both employees must notify Human Resources to ensure the integrity of the reporting relationship is maintained. Human Resources will confer with the Superintendent and GCA's Executive Director/School Counsel to determine the course of action to be taken.

Actions that may be taken to cure relatives that have perceived, or actual conflicts of interests include internal transfer of one of the parties to another department, one of the individuals being offered and accepting a change in position, moving one employee to another reporting line, resignation, or termination of one of the individuals. Either employee may apply for any open position in another department if they are qualified. However, a position will not be created to cure the situation and them being offered the position they applied for is not guaranteed. If an employee is transferred to another department or accepts another position, this may necessitate a reduction in pay, benefits, vacation, and/or summer break depending on the position accepted.

Relatives, as previously defined, of the CFO, Executive Director, Superintendent, Board members, Payroll, Benefits, and Human Resources employees are not allowed to be employed by Georgia Cyber Academy.

Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act

GCA recognizes that employees may need to be absent from work to serve in the US military. GCA provides military service leaves of absence to all regular full-time, part-time, and probationary employees in compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and applicable state laws.

If you need to take military service leave, you or an authorized military service officer should provide advance notice to your supervisor. When possible, you should give at least 30 days' notice of your request for leave. If 30 days' notice is not possible because of military necessity or for other reasons, you should give as much advance notice to GCA as possible.

Written notice is preferred, but not required. Where possible, please submit a copy of your military orders, training notice, or order to active duty to your supervisor or Human Resources.

All employees are eligible for military service leave if they are absent from work because of eligible military service. Independent contractors and temporary employees who were only employed for a brief, non-recurrent (one-time only) period before the start of military service are not eligible for leave under this policy.

For purposes of this policy, eligible military service means certain types of service (listed below) in the following branches of the US military:

- Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard), including the Reserves.
- National Guard, including the Army National Guard and Air National Guard, when the employee is engaged under federal authority in active duty for training, inactive duty training, or fulltime National Guard duty.
- Commissioned corps of the Public Health Service.
- Any other category of persons designated by the President in time of war or national emergency.

Eligible employees may take leave under this policy for the following types of military service:

- Active duty.
- Active duty for training.
- Initial active duty for training.
- Inactive duty training.
- Full-time National Guard duty.
- Submitting to an examination to determine your fitness for any of these services.

- Funeral honors duty performed by National Guard or Reserve members.
- Duty performed by intermittent disaster response personnel for the Public Health Service and approved training to prepare for this service.
- Service as an intermittent disaster response appointee of the National Disaster Medical System when employees are activated under federal authority or attending authorized training in support of a federal mission.

Military service leave is unpaid. However, employees may use any or all of their accrued but unused vacation or other paid time off during their military service leave.

Employees may be eligible for reemployment after their military service leave. Any employees who would like to return to work must report to work or submit an application for reemployment to Human Resources, including their military discharge documentation, if available, as follows:

- If their military service was for less than 31 days, they must report to work on the first regularly scheduled workday that is at least eight hours after they re-turn home from military service.
- If their military service was for 31 to 180 days, they must apply for reemployment within 14 days following completion of military service.
- If their military service was for more than 180 days, they must apply for reemployment within 90 days following completion of military service.
- If they suffered a service-connected injury or illness and they are hospitalized or convalescing, they have up to two years following completion of military service to return to their jobs or apply for reemployment, depending on the length of recovery time required.

If any employees are unable to comply with this reporting schedule through no fault of their own or if they are injured or recovering from an injury and need an accommodation for specific circumstances beyond their control, they should speak with Human Resources as soon as possible to determine if they are eligible for a reasonable accommodation or additional time to apply for reemployment. Employees who do not report to work or apply for reemployment within the applicable timeframe will be subject to GCA's rules about unexcused absences.

Nothing in this policy requires GCA to reemploy individuals who are not eligible for reemployment rights under applicable law.

An employee who leaves his or her job to perform military service has the right to elect to continue coverage under an existing employer-based health plan for the employee and his or her dependents for up to twenty-four (24) months while in the military.

Even if an employee does elect to continue coverage during military service, he or she has the right to be reinstated in the employer's health plan upon reemployment, generally without any waiting periods or exclusions (e.g., pre-existing condition exclusions) except for service-connected illnesses or injuries.

Under USERRA, employees who are past or present members of the uniformed service, have applied for membership in the uniformed service, or are obligated to serve in the uniformed service, may not be denied initial employment, reemployment, retention in employment, promotion, or any benefit of employment by an employer because of this status.

Additionally, an employer may not retaliate against anyone assisting in the enforcement of USERRA rights, including testifying or making a statement in connection with a proceeding under USERRA, even if that person has no service connection.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) is authorized to investigate and resolve complaints of USERRA violations.

For assistance in filing a complaint, or for any other information on USERRA, contact VETS at 1-866- 4USA-DOL or visit its Web site at <http://www.dol.gov/vets>. An interactive online USERRA Advisor can be viewed at <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/userra.htm>.

If the employee files a complaint with VETS and VETS is unable to resolve it, he or she may request that the case be referred to the Department of Justice or the Office of Special Counsel, as applicable, for representation. The employee may also bypass the VETS process and bring a civil action against an employer for violations of USERRA. Authority: 38 U.S.C. §§4301 - 4335

Employment At-Will

All employment at GCA is "at-will," as governed by the law of the state of Georgia. Either party has the right to terminate the relationship at any time for any reason. GCA also retains the discretion to make all other decisions concerning employees, including such items as demotions, transfers, job responsibilities, increases or reduction in salary, bonuses, other compensation, or any other decision by management with or without cause or notice. It is further understood that the "at-will" nature of employment with GCA is one aspect of employment that cannot be changed except in writing and signed by the Superintendent of GCA. Nothing in GCA's policies is intended to create a contract of any sort on the part of GCA or any of its employees, officers, directors, or agents for employment other than an at-will status. Nothing in this policy manual nullifies, modifies, or interprets the terms of the Employee Confidentiality, Proprietary Rights, and Non-Solicitation Agreement, and the Agreement to Arbitrate.

Termination of Employment

An employee may be separated from employment voluntarily or involuntarily by retirement, resignation, lack of work, or termination. Whether a termination is voluntary or involuntary, supervisors must bear in mind that each termination may involve consideration of unique facts or circumstances. Prior to taking any action regarding termination by GCA, the supervisor must first consult with Human Resources to assess the circumstances and appropriateness of termination. All termination decisions must always be made in a manner consistent with applicable federal, state, and local laws and only after approval of the Department Head, Department Director, Human Resources, the Superintendent, and Executive Director.

When appropriate, GCA may consider a development plan, a performance improvement plan, or other appropriate action prior to terminating an employee. However, GCA has the right to terminate an employee without using one or any of these methods.

GCA has the right to terminate an employee for any or no reason and specifically reserves the right to terminate an employee immediately when there is a basis for believing that the employee has engaged in conduct that GCA considers serious and unacceptable.

GCA employees will be terminated for unlawful acts, whether intentional or unintentional.

Employees whose employment terminates due to lack of work or who otherwise lose their job due to no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation, subject to applicable state unemployment laws. It is the responsibility of the terminated employee to file his or her unemployment compensation claim.

Resignation

Any employee who voluntarily resigns is expected to provide GCA with advance written notice and work for the required period as provided within their employment contract. :

Failure to provide such notices and work out the applicable period in its entirety may result in the employee not being eligible for rehire and reported to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) for job abandonment or require employee re-payment of any retention bonus funds previously provided to the employee during GCA year and/or liquidated damages pursuant to the employment contract.

The notice periods are to be worked in their entirety to train, prepare, and plan for the resigning employee's departure. Vacation and PTO time may not be used to shorten notice periods. Sick time used during remaining work periods must be accompanied by medical documentation of illness.

Upon receipt of the written notice, GCA reserves the right to accept the resignation as well as deciding the effective date of resignation. An employee's resignation date is their actual last day worked. Vacation, sick or personal time or a school holiday may not be used to extend a resignation date, nor can it be their last day of employment.

Human Resources may conduct a face-to-face exit interview to discuss an employee's reason for leaving and any impressions they may have about GCA. Should a face-to-face exit interview not be feasible then it will be conducted by either Zoom or by phone. During the exit interview, an employee can provide insights into areas for improvements for GCA and their specific position. All exit interview information is kept confidential between the existing employee and Human Resources.

Any GCA property issued to an employee, such as, but not limited to, software, computer equipment, printer, external computer accessories, monitors, phones, Wi-Fi, hot spots, databases, files, key fob, keys, document cameras, iPads, Title I equipment, stand up desks (if applicable), teaching materials, documents, files, training manuals, workbooks, books, passwords, and all confidential and proprietary information must be returned at the time of termination. The employee will be monetarily responsible for any lost or damaged items.

In the event the employee leaves GCA and returns within one year of termination date, prior services will be recognized and reflected in an adjusted calculated seniority date. If previous employees return to GCA after the specified one-year period, they may not receive credit for such prior service.

Should a hiring manager wish to rehire a former employee they must contact Human Resources PRIOR TO an offer being made to ensure the former employee is eligible for rehire. Rehiring employees affected by position elimination, layoff, or restructuring must be approved by Human Resources and the Superintendent.

Workplace, Schedule, and Hours

Hours of Operation

The normal work week for GCA is Monday through Friday, and core business hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. EST. Other workweeks and schedules may be adopted based on business needs.

GCA Administrative Office Hours at 1750 Phoenix Blvd. are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. EST.

All employees are expected to work extended hours as required by business needs. Non- exempt and hourly employees will be paid according to laws regarding overtime provisions.

Work Schedules

Work schedules for employees vary throughout the organization. Hours of employment will be determined by the Department Director and Superintendent. Days of work, location, and hours are depicted on each employee's job description.

School hours are subject to change. Employees will be notified if such a change becomes necessary.

Flex-time and Flex-place

Flex-time is a term used to define an alternate work schedule by which an exempt/salaried employee may begin and end their workday within specified limits dictated by the needs of their position. Flexplace is a term used to define that some positions allow a day or more of their work week to be completed from home or location other than the GCA offices, including another state. Flex-time and flexible workplace are defined in an employee's job description or in a signed addendum to an employee's contract. Temporary flex-time or flex-place changes may be simply agreed to in writing specifying the period of time that this may occur, such as in an email. Both flex-time and flex-place are subject to Department Head, Director, Superintendent, and Human Resources approval.

Individual departments may use a flex-time work schedule or flex-place, subject to the following conditions:

- Each Department Head will ensure coverage during its "core hours" of operation. The Department Head has the discretion to determine staffing coverage to meet the operating requirements of the department.
- Department Heads will be responsible for resolving interdepartmental schedule conflicts and assuring that proper coverage is maintained.

A Department Head may, at his/her sole discretion, implement, continue, or discontinue flex-time/flex-place work schedules. As the sole discretion of the Department Head, an employee may be re-assigned to work core hours or work on-site at any time.

Employees shall not maintain any confidential or legally protected information (including, but not limited to, information protected by FERPA) at a flex-place site unless that information is protected from disclosure (e.g., by robust passwords or locks) to other persons (including family members) who share that site. Employees will use precautions to assure protection of confidential information. Employees who leave the employment of GCA are required to return all GCA supplies and equipment prior to their departure and will abide by management decisions regarding any confidential data or information.

A flex-time schedule, once agreed upon by the manager and Human Resources, should remain stable except when a special need arises. Emergency situations, which require schedule modification, may be accommodated with approval of the Department Head.

Management Responsibilities

Approve and revise work schedules based on business needs. Approval of alternative work schedules should ensure that:

- The level and quality of customer service are maintained or increased.
- The level of quality, efficiency, and performance are maintained or increased.
- Schedules coordinate with needs of internal and external customers.
- Resources are used efficiently and effectively.
- Operational deadlines are at a minimum met.
- Absenteeism and tardiness are improved.

Employee Responsibilities

- Complete assigned work.
- Maintain full accessibility.
- Use work time effectively.
- Assure the same or improved level of customer service.
- Maintain dependable attendance.
- Document timekeeping accurately.
- Communicate work problems and needs to his/her manager.

Adhere to all oversight requirements that may be put in place or required as a condition of being granted or maintaining flex-time and/or flex-place accommodations, including staying on camera and mic as may be required. Be on Zoom or other designated platform and immediately available for communication with management for the entirety of the work period.

Understand that GCA uses many tools to monitor employees remotely or in flex-time situations.

Eligible employees may have a flex-place arrangement, authorized for either their full or partial schedule (e.g., one or more days a week or a five-day schedule). Employees who are either full-time or part-time are considered virtual when their work is performed primarily from their home in a flexplace capacity. The employee's compensation benefits, work status, and work responsibilities will not change due to participation in a flex-place program.

By participating in the flex-place agreement, the employee agrees to maintain safe conditions in the at home workspace, and to practice the same safety habits as he/she would in his/her office on the GCA premises. GCA is not responsible for injuries that may occur at any flex-place location or in route between locations.

Flex time/Flex-place employees are responsible for adhering to the same conditions of employment, performance standards, and policies and procedures as non-flex-time/ non-flex- place staff and are also responsible for all GCA equipment it uses. Flex-time/flex-place employment does not change the nature of the employment at-will relationship.

Department Management, Human Resources, and Superintendent approval is required prior to extending virtual employment to an employee. GCA reserves the right to discontinue the flex-time/flex-place agreement at any time.

In order to be eligible to participate in the flex-time/flex-place program, an employee must be in good standing with the department. ("Good standing" means, but is not limited to, no verbal or written warnings, performance improvement plans, and meets all performance objectives on time.). Employees shall have prior approval from the Manager, Department Head, Human Resources, and Superintendent to work a pre-approved flex-time schedule or to work at an alternative venue. Employees are responsible for attending all mandatory departmental meetings, Professional Development, Test Administration Windows, Trainings, Conferences, and Critical Days, whether that requires travel and in-person or virtual attendance.

Remote Worker and Home-based Worker Policy

Responsibilities

Georgia Cyber Academy considers employment at a remote location to be an acceptable alternative work arrangement in certain situations where the employee and supervisor both find that the job responsibilities can still be met from an off-site location without disruption to GCA. If this is allowable it will be clearly noted in the job description that is signed as part of the employee contractual process.

A remote work location allows an employee to work from home and/or in a satellite location for all or part of their regular workweek. It is not an entitlement; it will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis; and in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with GCA. GCA can determine at any time that a remote work location is not satisfactory to GCA, whether because of an employee's performance, GCA's needs, or any other reason. In such an event, the employee will be expected to work at a GCA location determined by GCA for any number of days per week or month deemed appropriate by GCA. The employee remains obligated to comply with all School rules, policies, practices, and instructions regardless of their workplace location.

If a situation arises where a work location change is requested by an employee, the employee must present the request in writing to their immediate manager. The manager will review the request with Human Resources and together the manager and HR will make a recommendation to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will approve or deny any changes of workplace.

If GCA approves the change in work location, the employee and GCA will outline the details of the alternate work arrangement to include work rules, location/office setup, and expectations (to be available and online during business hours, on camera, on mic, etc.).

The employee continues to perform all normal job responsibilities, including those that may be assigned from time to time. The amount of time the employee is expected to work per day or pay period will not change because of the work location. The employee will attend all required meetings, professional development, training, testing, etc. and follow the Critical Days Policy. The manager shall perform all required duties of proper oversight and maintain open communication and discuss with the employee any concerns that arise.

Employees working at home are expected to schedule work without interruptions during the agreed upon period that they are to be at work and available during the day. Employees are expected to maintain professionalism in terms of job responsibilities. The same current high standards of productivity, and outcome of work products are to be maintained by employees working in telecommuting arrangements. Under no circumstances will an outside business associate, vendor of GCA, a School employee, or student visit the employee's remote work site without prior written approval by the employee's manager.

Tax Liability

It is the employee's responsibility to determine any income tax implications of maintaining a remote or home office area. GCA will not provide tax guidance, nor will GCA assume any additional tax liabilities. Employees are encouraged to consult with a qualified tax professional to discuss income tax implications.

Equipment & Tools

GCA may provide specific tools/equipment for the employee to perform his/her current duties. This may include computer hardware, printer, monitors, computer software, telephone, and other applicable equipment as deemed necessary by GCA. GCA equipment is for GCA- related work and projects only. You may not use school equipment for unlawful purposes, for work for other employers, or for personal use, nor may non-GCA employees use it. Please refer to the policy on Equipment Use for more information.

Any hardware or software provided or paid for by GCA remains the property of GCA and must be returned to GCA on request. Products, software, and all other intellectual property developed while working remotely are solely the property of GCA. Employees are not permitted to use their own equipment or software for work purposes unless prior approval by their immediate supervisor and Human Resources has been received.

Viruses, hacking, phishing, or any other potential corruption or inadvertent disclosure of GCA files must be promptly (and in no event later than the next business day) reported to the employee's supervisor and a ticket submitted for fixing the problem.

Workspace

The employee shall designate a workspace within the remote work location for placement and installation of equipment to be used during the workday. The employee shall maintain this workspace in a safe condition, free from hazards, and other dangers to the employee and equipment.

Office Supplies

Office supplies will be provided by GCA as needed. Out-of-pocket expenses for other supplies will not be reimbursed unless prior approval from GCA's Finance Manager is received. For details on office supplies and reimbursable expenses please direct your questions to GCA's Finance Manager and/or Accounts Payable specialist.

Worker's Compensation

Worker's compensation liability for job-related accidents will continue to exist for telecommuting employees. If an employee is injured while working at their remote location, that injury would need to be reported and worker's compensation applied for, and the carrier would make the decision whether it is job-related or not.

Insurance

GCA is not liable for loss or destruction that may occur in or to the employee's home or remote location that is not under contract with GCA (e.g., GCA's Administrative Office at Phoenix Blvd.). This includes family members, visitors, or others that may become injured within or around the employee's remote location and/or equipment.

Employees should note that some homeowner policies do not automatically cover injuries arising out of, or relating to, the business use of the home. Employees are required to have their own homeowners'/tenants' liability policy endorsed to cover bodily injury, property damage or theft, and the business use of GCA and personal equipment to all parties arising out of or relating to the business use of their approved alternate worksite. Employees who live in a rented property should be aware that their lease may not permit business use of the premises.

Dependent Care

During established work hours, the employee agrees that family care demands shall not compete with work except in the case of an emergency. Working at a remote location is not designated to be a replacement for appropriate family care (e.g., children, pet, other adult dependents).

Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate family care needs with the approval of the Superintendent, the focus of the remote work arrangement must remain on the job responsibilities, meeting business needs, and individual performance.

Communication

Employees must be available by phone, email, and other predetermined communication methods during core business hours. (Core hours are defined as 8:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday or designated work hours as set by school officials in writing). Employees will be available for meetings, testing, training, professional development, school events, and other activities deemed necessary by GCA during core business hours, both in person and virtual as may be required.

Training, Professional Development, and Conference Requirements

On-going training, professional development, and conferences may be required of all employees. GCA periodically schedules additional training, professional development, and/or educational conference programs. Some training, professional development, and conference sessions may be voluntary, while others will be required. In-person training, professional development, and conference sessions may require travel and/or overnight stays. On-going training, professional development sessions, and/or educational programs may be conducted in-person while other sessions are conducted virtually.

In-person training, professional development sessions, and conference sessions require that the employee be dressed appropriately per communicated guidelines and that ALL protocols and procedures put in place to protect both the employee and their colleagues are followed. Computers should be put away unless needed for the training, professional development, and/or conference session. If computers are needed, then the screen should reflect the program that the session is related to or viewing the materials for the training, professional development, and/or conference session. Staff should not be multi-tasking and/or checking their email during a training, professional development, and/or conference session except during breaks.

In addition to the above requirements, virtual training, professional development, and conference sessions also require that the employee be on camera, paying attention to the content being related, and participating for the entirety of the training and professional development session. Employees should not be in a car, driving, in a carpool line, on the phone, and/or engaging in any other activity. The employee should be at their computer and in an area where their complete focus is on the virtual training, professional development, and/or conference session being delivered.

Failure to attend and complete required training, professional development, and/or conference sessions, both in-person and virtual, as scheduled and according to the aforementioned protocols and procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.

Meeting Requirements

Meetings are scheduled throughout the year for a variety of reasons. Some meetings may be voluntary, while others will be required. Meetings may be conducted in-person or virtually. In-person meetings may require travel and/or overnight stays.

In-person meetings require that the employee be dressed appropriately per communicated guidelines and that ALL protocols and procedures put in place to protect both the employee and their colleagues are followed. Computers should be put away unless needed for the meeting. If computers are needed, then the screen should reflect the program that the meeting is related to or viewing the materials for meeting. Staff should not be multi-tasking and/or checking their email during a meeting except during breaks.

In addition to the above requirements, virtual meetings also require that the employee be on camera, paying attention to the content being related, and participating for the entirety of the meeting. Employees should not be in a car, driving, in a carpool line, on the phone, and/or engaging in any other activity. The employee should join the meeting from their computer, focused and fully participating in the meeting.

Failure to attend required meetings, both in-person and virtual, as scheduled and according to the aforementioned protocols and procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.

School Events and Activities Requirements

School events and activities may be scheduled throughout the year for a variety of reasons. Some school events and/or activities may be voluntary, while others will be required. School events and/or activities may be conducted in-person or virtually. In-person school activities and/or events may require travel and/or overnight stays.

In-person school events and/or activities require that the employee be dressed appropriately per communicated guidelines and that ALL protocols and procedures put in place to protect both the employee and their colleagues are followed. Computers should be put away unless needed for GCA event and/or activity. If computers are needed, then the screen should reflect what is needed for GCA event and/or activity. Staff should not be multi-tasking, on their phones, and/or checking their email during a meeting except during breaks.

In addition to the above requirements, virtual school events and/or activities also require that the employee be on camera, paying attention to the content being related, and participating for the entirety of GCA event and/or activity. Employees should not be in a car, driving, in a carpool line, on the phone, and/or engaging in any other activity other than GCA event and/or activity that they are required to attend. The employee should be at their computer and in an area where their complete focus is on GCA event and/or activity that is taking place.

Failure to attend required school-wide events and/or activities, both in-person and virtual, as scheduled and according to the aforementioned protocols and procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.

Testing Administration and Testing Assignments Requirements

Testing administrations and assignments may be scheduled throughout the year for a variety of reasons. Some testing assignments may be voluntary, while others will be required. School testing administrations/assignments may be conducted in-person or virtually depending on the requirements of the test being administered. In-person testing administrations and/or assignments may require travel and/or overnight stays.

In-person testing administrations/assignments require that the employee be dressed appropriately per communicated guidelines and that ALL protocols and procedures put in place to protect both the employee, their colleagues, and our students are followed. Computers should be put away unless needed for the testing administration/assignment. If computers are needed, then the screen should reflect what is needed for the testing administration/assignment. Staff should not spend time multi-tasking, on their phones, and/or checking their email during a testing administration/assignment except during breaks.

In addition to the above requirements, virtual/remote testing administration and/or assignments also require that the employee be on camera, paying attention to their assignment, and participating for the entirety of the testing administration and/or testing assignment. Employees should not be in a car, driving, in a carpool line, on the phone, and/or engaging in any other activity other than the testing administration/assignment that they have been given. The employee should be at their computer and in an area where their complete focus is on the testing administration/assignment for which they are responsible.

Failure to attend required testing assignments and/or administrations, both in-person and virtual, as scheduled and according to the aforementioned protocols and procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.

Office Access & Visitors Policy

Georgia Cyber Academy cares about the safety and security of its employees. In an effort to maintain the maximum safety and security possible at a minimum inconvenience to staff and visitors, GCA has set guidelines for facility access for both employees and visitors.

All entry doors to the administrative office are to remain locked all day. The main entry door will have a system whereby visitors can make their presence known and be granted entry into the facility. Outside of working hours, employees will not have access to the administrative office unless previously arranged. The main entryway to the building is open Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. EST.

All visitors must always sign in at the front desk and be escorted by authorized personnel. Visitors are not permitted to roam the premises unattended.

Lactation/Breastfeeding Accommodations

As part of our family-friendly policies and benefits, GCA supports breastfeeding mothers by accommodating the mother who wishes to express milk during her workday when separated from her newborn child.

For up to two years after the child's birth, any employee who is breastfeeding her child will be provided reasonable break times to express breast milk for their baby. Eligible employees should notify their direct supervisor of the frequency, timing, and duration of lactation breaks they need to take.

At the GCA Administrative Office, employees will contact the Office & Facilities Manager for access to the space for expressing milk. For offsite events sponsored by GCA, a space will be designated specifically for lactating mothers. Employees should contact the events coordinator for the location of this room.

Expressed breast milk must be stored in a sealed container designed for the purpose of storing breastmilk. The sealed container must then be placed inside another leakproof, opaque bag or container BEFORE being placed in any common-area shared refrigerator. Expressed breastmilk must be taken home nightly.

Employee Childcare Responsibilities

Georgia Cyber Academy strives to maintain a professional work environment yet understands the need for an atmosphere that is family oriented. GCA values the flexibility that it can provide to its employees due to the virtual setting utilized by GCA. Therefore, GCA desires to implement a childcare policy that encompasses the family friendly values of GCA while maintaining the degree of professionalism necessary to serve the families of GCA.

Employees of GCA must provide their undivided attention to GCA families, personnel, supervisors, and/or other parties engaged by GCA to perform services when performing their duties and responsibilities during the agreed upon workday hours per the employee's job description. Childcare needs must not interfere with such duties and responsibilities.

- Employees may not bring any child/children to any marketing, training, professional development, conference, promotional, or testing situations where such employee's participation is expected as part of their duties.
- Employees may not bring any child/children to meetings. If an Employee feels it is necessary to bring such child/children in violation of this provision, then prior written approval from the Superintendent must be obtained, and the employee will have to provide their own childcare. No childcare will be provided by GCA for children during meetings.
- Employees may bring their child/children to school outings and events, if one of the following is true:

- The Employee's child/children will be supervised by an appropriate childcare provider other than the Employee or any other GCA employee, or
- The child is a GCA student and is participating in an age-appropriate school outing/event and more than one GCA employee is overseeing the outing/event.

A GCA student, parent, employee, supervisor, or other party engaged by GCA to perform services should never feel that she/he is being disrupted by an Employee's child or childcare schedule. Employees are required to give their full attention to the duties and responsibilities described herein or as determined by GCA and as necessary to fulfill the Employee's responsibilities.

If the employee's childcare situation is found, at the sole determination of the Superintendent and Human Resources, to impede the fulfillment of the employee's duties and responsibilities or is disruptive to the employee's communications, meetings, professional development, training, testing responsibilities, instructional duties, or other assigned duties, then the employee will need to arrange for childcare outside the home, make alternate childcare arrangements, or resign their position. GCA will not be responsible for any costs related to childcare. For example, if an Employee needs to drive extra miles to take a child to a care provider in order to attend an outing, the extra mileage cannot be expensed to GCA.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employee Dependent Care and/or Caregiver Responsibilities

Georgia Cyber Academy strives to maintain a professional work environment yet understands the need for an atmosphere that is family oriented. GCA values the flexibility that it can provide to its employees due to the virtual setting utilized by GCA. Therefore, GCA desires to implement a dependent care policy that encompasses the family friendly values of GCA while maintaining the degree of professionalism necessary to serve the families of GCA.

Employees of GCA must provide their undivided attention to GCA families, personnel, supervisors, and/or other parties engaged by GCA to perform services when performing their duties and responsibilities during the agreed upon workday hours per the employee's job description. Dependent care and/or the employee's care giver responsibilities MUST NOT preclude the employee from carrying out their duties and responsibilities, and/or meeting the expectations as laid out in this handbook, procedures, protocols, or policies of GCA. Dependent and caregiver needs must not interfere with such duties and responsibilities.

- Employees may not bring any dependent or other individual that they are responsible for the care of to any marketing, training, professional development, conference, promotional, or testing situations where such employee's participation is expected as part of their duties.
- Employees may not bring any dependent or other individual that they are responsible for the care of to meetings. If an Employee feels it is necessary to bring such dependent or other individual that they are responsible for the care of in violation of this provision, then prior written approval from the Superintendent must be obtained, and the employee will have to provide their own external supervision provider for that dependent or other individual that they are responsible for the care of. No external supervision will be provided by GCA for an employee's dependent or other individual that they are responsible for the care of during meetings.
- Employees may bring their dependent or other individual that they are responsible for the care of to school outings and events, if one of the following is true:
 - The Employee's dependent or other individual that they are responsible for the care of will be supervised by an appropriate external supervisory provider other than the Employee or any other GCA employee, AND

- Prior written permission from the Superintendent has been obtained.

A GCA student, parent, employee, supervisor, or other party engaged by GCA to perform services should never feel that she/he is being disrupted by the schedule of an employee's dependent or other individual that they are responsible for the care of. Employees are required to give their full attention to the duties and responsibilities described herein or as determined by GCA, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. EST or other time period as agreed upon per their job description each non-holiday weekday, excluding vacation, sick, PTO day, or other approved leave, and during other hours as necessary to fulfill the Employee's responsibilities.

If the employee's dependent or other individual that they are responsible for the care of situation is found, at the sole determination of the Superintendent and Human Resources, to impede the fulfillment of the employee's duties and responsibilities or is disruptive to the employee's communications, meetings, professional development, trainings, testing responsibilities, instructional duties, or other assigned duties or requirements, then the employee will need to arrange for external dependent care or caregiver supervision outside the home, make alternate dependent or caregiver arrangements, or resign their position. GCA will not be responsible for any costs related to dependent care or the supervision of an individual that the employee has responsibility for the care of. For example, if an Employee needs to drive extra miles to take a dependent or an individual that they have taken caregiver responsibility for to a care provider in order to attend an outing, the extra mileage cannot be expensed to GCA.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employee Pet Care Responsibilities

Georgia Cyber Academy strives to maintain a professional work environment yet understands the need for an atmosphere that is family oriented. GCA values the flexibility that it can provide to its employees due to the virtual setting utilized by GCA. Therefore, GCA desires to implement a pet care policy that encompasses the family friendly values of GCA while maintaining the degree of professionalism necessary to serve the families of GCA.

Employees of GCA must provide their undivided attention to GCA families, personnel, supervisors, and/or other parties engaged by GCA to perform services when performing their duties and responsibilities during the agreed upon workday hours per the employee's job description. Pet care MUST NOT preclude the employee from carrying out their duties and responsibilities, and/or meeting the expectations as laid out in this handbook, procedures, protocols, or policies of the School. Pet needs must not interfere with such duties, responsibilities, GCA's expectations.

- Employees may not bring any pet other than an officially licensed assistance animal they are responsible for the care of to any marketing, training, professional development, conference, promotional, or testing situations where such employee's participation is expected as part of their duties.
- Employees may not bring any pet other than an officially licensed assistance animal to meetings. If an Employee feels it is necessary to bring such a pet in violation of this provision, then prior written approval from the Superintendent must be obtained, and the employee will have to provide their own external supervision provider for the pet. No external supervision will be provided by GCA for an employee's pet during meetings.
- Employees may bring their pet to outdoor school outings and events if the following is true:
 - The Employee's pet will be supervised by an appropriate external supervisory provider other than the Employee or any other GCA employee, AND
 - Prior written permission from the Superintendent has been obtained.
- Officially licensed assistance animals are not subject to these requirements.

A GCA student, parent, employee, supervisor, or other party engaged by GCA to perform services should never feel that she/he is being disrupted by the schedule of an employee's pet. Employees are required to give their full attention to the duties and responsibilities described herein or as determined by GCA, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. EST or other time period as agreed upon per their job description each non-holiday weekday, excluding vacation, sick, PTO day, or other approved leave, and during other hours as necessary to fulfill the Employee's responsibilities.

If the employee's pet situation is found, at the sole determination of the Superintendent and Human Resources, to impede the fulfillment of the employee's duties and responsibilities or is disruptive to the employee's communications, meetings, professional development, trainings, testing responsibilities, instructional duties, or other assigned duties or requirements, then the employee will need to arrange for external pet care outside the home, make alternate pet care arrangements, or resign their position. GCA will not be responsible for any costs related to pet care. For example, if an Employee needs to drive extra miles to take a pet to a care provider in order to attend an outing, the extra mileage cannot be expensed to GCA.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Smoke-free and Vape-free Workplace

Georgia Cyber Academy believes that employees and visitors should be able to work and conduct business in a smoke-free environment. Smoking is not allowed in the GCA building or within twenty-five (25) feet of any school entrance or exit. Employees, vendors, parents, students, volunteers, and guests visiting GCA need to go outside of the building to smoke.

Non-permitted Items and Activities:

- All forms of tobacco, including but not limited to:
- Cigarettes
- Cigars
- Pipes
- Hookahs
- E-cigarettes
- All forms of smokeless tobacco
- Vaping
- Tobacco use includes smoking, chewing, dipping or any other use of tobacco products.

Smoking refers to inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying of any lighted or heated tobacco product, as well as non-tobacco smoking substances, smoking, or vaping instruments.

The policy also applies to the use of any tobacco/vaping brand or corporate name, trademark, logo, symbol, motto, or messaging that is identifiable with any brand of tobacco product or company that manufactures tobacco. Because GCA may be subject to criminal and civil penalties for violations of applicable smoking and vaping laws, we must insist on strict adherence to this policy.

Employees smoking or vaping in any non-smoking area may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Please contact your on-site supervisor or Human Resources if you have any questions regarding the smoking and vaping policy.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Drug-Free Workplace

Any individual who conducts business for GCA, is applying for a position or is conducting business on GCA's property is covered by our drug-free workplace policy. Our policy includes, but is not limited to full-time employees, part-time employees, and off-site employees.

The policy of GCA is to maintain a drug-free workplace. As a condition of continued employment, all GCA employees must comply with this policy. The term "workplace" is defined as GCA property, any GCA-sponsored activity, GCA-sponsored events, or any other site where the employee is performing work for GCA or representing GCA. The term "drug" as used in this policy includes alcoholic beverages and prescription drugs, as well as illegal inhalants and illegal drugs and/or controlled substances as defined in schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act, 21U.S.C. Sec. 812, 21 C.F.R. Sec 1308, and the state and local law of the jurisdiction where the workplace is located, including, but not limited to, marijuana, opiates (e.g., heroin, morphine), cocaine, phencyclidine (PCP), and amphetamines. If a GCA employee's primary worksite is a home office, alcohol may be permitted in the home, but drinking alcohol and/or being under the influence of alcohol is strictly prohibited during working hours. An employee who engages in an activity prohibited by this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Prohibited activities under this policy include the possession, use, sale, attempted sale, distribution, manufacture, purchase, attempted purchase, transfer, or cultivation of drugs, as defined above, in the workplace, as defined above. Employees are also prohibited from being at the workplace with a detectable amount of drugs in their system.

Nothing in this policy is meant to prohibit the appropriate use of over-the-counter medication or other medication that can legally be prescribed under both federal and state law, to the extent that it does not impair an employee's job performance or safety or the safety of others. Employees who take over-the-counter medication or other medication that can legally be prescribed under both federal and state law to treat a disability should inform their supervisors if they believe the medication will impair their job performance, safety, or the safety of others or if they believe they need a reasonable accommodation before reporting to work while under the influence of that medication.

Notification of Conviction

Any employee who is convicted of a criminal drug violation must notify GCA in writing within five (5) calendar days of the conviction. GCA will take appropriate action within thirty (30) days of notification. Federal contracting agencies will be notified when appropriate.

Assistance

Georgia Cyber Academy recognizes that alcohol and drug abuse and addiction are treatable illnesses. We also realize that early intervention and support improve the success of rehabilitation. To support our employees, our drug-free workplace policy:

- Encourages employees to seek help if they are concerned that they or their family members may have a drug and/or alcohol problem.
- Encourages employees to utilize the services of qualified professionals in the community to assess the seriousness of suspected drug or alcohol problems and identify appropriate sources of help.
- Allows the use of accrued paid leave while seeking treatment for alcohol and other drug problems.

Treatment for alcoholism and/or other drug use disorders may be covered by the employee benefit plan. However, the ultimate financial responsibility for recommended treatment belongs to the employee.

Confidentiality

All information received by GCA through the drug-free workplace program is confidential communication. Access to this information is limited to those who have a legitimate need to know in compliance with relevant laws and management policies.

Weapons-free Workplace

It is the intent of GCA to provide a safe and secure workplace for employees, vendors, volunteers, families, students, visitors, and others with whom we do business with. GCA expressly forbids the possession of weapons on school property where such prohibition is permitted by law. GCA has a zero tolerance for possession of any type of weapon, firearm, explosive, or ammunition on school property, GCA-sponsored events and school activities/outings which includes, but is not limited to, all school facilities, vehicles, and equipment, whether leased or owned by GCA or its employees, vendors, volunteers, families, students, and visitors. In addition, weapons in employee-owned vehicles parked on school property are strictly forbidden. Weapons are any instrument of offensive or defensive combat and any device designed or traditionally used to inflict harm or injury and include, but are not limited to, explosives, firearms, bows, slingshots, switchblades, daggers, blackjacks, brass or metal knuckles, hunting knives, nunchaku (“nun-chucks”), dirk knives, bowie knives, sharp knives, sand clubs, razors, tasers, throwing knives/stars, and any device capable of projecting a ball, pellet, arrow, bullet, missile, shell or other material.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination. In enforcing this guideline, GCA reserves the right to request inspections of any employee and their personal effects, including personal vehicles, while on school premises, when there is reasonable suspicion that the search will turn up evidence of misconduct. Any employee who refuses to allow inspection will be subject to the same disciplinary action as being found in possession of firearms.

Employees within GCA share the responsibility for identifying violators of this guideline. An employee who witnesses or suspects another individual of violating this guideline should immediately report this information to his/her on-site supervisor and Human Resources.

Behavior and Conduct

We select and hire based upon our values of making a positive impact on the lives of our students and providing a high performing and challenging academic program. As such, we expect the best from all of our colleagues in meeting the needs of GCA, our students, and our families. All faculty and staff should be focused and deliberate in obtaining or exceeding GCA’s annual goals and their own individual job duties and goals, as well.

To ensure that our expectations are communicated, and that feedback is provided fairly and consistently, GCA always relies upon both managers and employees to understand their roles in the process and to keep the lines of communication open, including formal and informal feedback throughout the year. GCA’s performance cycle is July 1st – June 30th of the following year. The cornerstone of any performance management program is open communication and regular feedback.

Performance

Supervisors and employees are required to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, routine basis. Timely and regular feedback is key to successful working relationships. Managers are expected to regularly communicate how well employees are meeting expectations in their current job, to clarify job responsibilities, and to review progress toward goals. If employees have questions or concerns about performance, they should take the initiative to ask their supervisors to discuss their concerns as they occur. This process provides employees and their supervisors with the tools to discuss, explore, and document plans for improvement and advancement.

Georgia's TKES and LKES system of evaluation will be used at a minimum for all instructional and school level leadership as required. Additional performance evaluative tools may be employed for all positions including but not limited to, departmental performance rubrics, Cognia's ELEOT observation tool, additional observation tools for specialized programs, efficiency reports/data, effectiveness reports/data, Performance Improvement Plans ("PIPs"), informal documentation, tangible deliverables, surveys, etc. Collectively, these may be used to measure overall employee performance.

Code of Ethics

The successful business operation and reputation of GCA is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of our employees. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The continued success of GCA is dependent upon our customers' trust and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees owe a duty to GCA, its scholars, parents, and vendors to act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

GCA will comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations and expects its directors, officers, and employees to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, fraudulent, or unethical conduct.

In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide you with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with your immediate supervisor and/or the Human Resources Director. If a situation arises that involves a legal question or is reasonably likely to lead to potential litigation, the matter should be discussed with your supervisor and/or the Human Resources Director who shall then consult with the Superintendent and school's legal counsel.

In addition to compliance with the regulations and policies of GCA and GCA Board, GCA expects its directors, officers, and employees to comply with all State of Georgia Board of Education Administrative Rules including but not limited to the Georgia Professional Standards Committee (GaPSC) Code of Ethics.

Compliance with this policy of business ethics and conduct is the responsibility of every employee. Disregarding or failing to comply with this standard of business ethics and conduct could lead to disciplinary action up to and including possible termination and/or non-renewal of employment. Any conduct or act that is unlawful may result in immediate termination.

GaPSC Code of Ethics

Please refer to the Appendix Section at the end of handbook for the GaPSC Code of Ethics.

Self-Reporting Rule

All employees shall self-report, in writing, to their Principal, if applicable, their Department Director, and Human Resources, within forty-eight (48) hours of any arrests, citations, or charges involving the abuse of a child, the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance, or charges involving Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Battery, Possession (including e-mail transmissions) or Sale of Pornography Involving Minors, and Sexual Relations with scholars. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt nor shall be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative, or judicial.

It is the responsibility of the employee to immediately notify, in writing, to their Principal, if applicable, their Department Director, and Human Resources, within forty-eight (48) hours of any issues that arise regarding fingerprint clearance and/or the issuance of a Georgia teaching certificate.

In addition, all persons shall self-report, in writing, to their Principal, if applicable, their Department Director, and Human Resources, within forty-eight (48) hours, any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion intervention program, or entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere for any criminal offense other than minor traffic violations. DUI and DWI are not considered minor and must be reported.

Information omitted or not accurately depicted on an employee's application and/or as part of the hiring process regarding any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion intervention program, or entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere for any criminal offense other than minor traffic violations will be grounds for immediate termination.

Student Discipline and Code of Conduct

Teacher Reporting Information

A teacher is required, consistent with GCA policy and applicable law, to manage his or her online classroom, including disciplining students and referring students to the principal or designee to maintain discipline in the online classroom.

Any teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior which violates the student code of conduct sufficient to substantially interfere with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn must file a report of such behavior with the principal or designee.

The principal and teacher should thereafter follow the procedures set forth in the Student Discipline Code of Conduct procedure and as set forth in Georgia law, specifically O.C.G.A. § 20- 2737-738.

Student behavior which violates state or federal laws as specified in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1184 will result in a report being filed with the police and district attorney.

The Superintendent and/or designee shall develop procedures and guidelines as necessary for implementation of this policy and law.

Reporting Inappropriate Behaviors

The School adheres to the requirements found in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.7 and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's state mandated process for students to follow reporting instances of alleged inappropriate sexual behavior by a school employee.

Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, or other inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator or other school district employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.

Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual

abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.

The principal or principal's designee who receives a report of abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to the appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 or § 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by GCA. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the principal or the principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the State Charter School Commission and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

"Sexual abuse" means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any sexual act as defined in O.C.G.A. § 19- 7-5.

"Sexual misconduct" includes behavior by an educator that is directed at a student and intended to sexually arouse or titillate the educator or the child. Educator sexual misconduct by an educator may include, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

- Making sexual comments, jokes, or gestures.
- Showing or displaying sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations, or messages.
- Writing sexual messages/graffiti on notes or the internet.
- Spreading sexual rumors.
- Spying on students as they dress, shower, or use the restroom at school.
- Flashing or "mooning" students.
- Touching, excessively hugging, or grabbing students in a sexual way.
- Forcing a student to kiss him/her or do something else of a sexual nature.
- Talking or asking about a student's developing body, sexuality, dating habits, etc.
- Talking repeatedly about sexual activities or sexual fantasies.
- Making fun of your body parts.
- Calling students sexual names.

For complaints that fall under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), please refer to the attached Sexual Harassment Policy at the end of this Handbook. Title IX prohibits sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity) discrimination in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Mandated Reporter and Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct

All School staff are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect of minors. GCA will provide annual training to all school staff and volunteers to facilitate identification of such potential reporting obligations. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when they have "reasonable cause to believe that a child who is 17 years of age or younger and known to them in a professional

or official capacity has been harmed or is in danger of being harmed--physically, sexually, or through neglect--and that a caregiver either committed the harm or should have taken steps to prevent the child from harm.” “Abuse” shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Physical Abuse: The deprivation of the child of food, shelter, clothing, care and supervision, medical and dental care and treatment, or educational opportunity; non-accidental and physically assaultive behavior inflicted upon the child, which results in demonstrable tissue injury to the child.

Emotional Abuse: A consistent pattern of conduct, speech or attitude toward the child, which arrests the child’s development or demonstrably impairs the child psychologically and/or emotionally. GCA acknowledges the emotionally abusive impact witnessing domestic violence has on children. GCA personnel are advised to follow the below outlined procedure when such abuse is suspected.

Sexual Abuse: The sexual exploitation of a child or his or her image; physical contact, whether with or without the consent of the child, with his or her genitalia, breasts or buttocks in a sexual context; exposing to or in the presence of a child one’s genitalia, breasts, or buttocks, or causing the child to have any physical contact with the same.

State law requires that school staff report any suspected abuse within 24 hours. Once you become aware that a student may be a victim of abuse or neglect, you **MUST** take the following steps:

Notify the Designated Reporter, which at GCA is the Counseling and Student Support Services Director immediately of the situation. After reporting the necessary information to the Counseling and Student Support Services Director, the reporter must fill out a child abuse/neglect incident report located in the office. The incident report shall include:

- Name, age, date of birth, and address of alleged victim
- Names of parents and/or caretakers of alleged victim
- Name, address, age or birth date, and relationship of alleged perpetrator
- Type of injury or harm allegedly done to the victim
- Description of the incident (time/date, place in which it occurred, and indication of intention to harm)
- Names, dates of birth, ages, and schools of siblings

The Counseling and Student Support Services Director will assist you and the student in understanding the next steps after the report is taken by the intake worker answering the hotline on the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). Within 48 hours of the hotline call the case must be assigned. Once the case is assigned, DFCS will send a letter to GCA providing the contact information for the caseworker and documentation of the initiation of the investigation. The caseworker will contact the Counseling and Student Support Services Director if any further information is needed. When necessary, the caseworker will speak with the staff member who reported the abuse or neglect.

No one in the workplace, including supervisors, is permitted to suppress, change, or edit a report of abuse. A mandated reporter who willfully fails to report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect is subject to license suspension or revocation, and subject to criminal prosecution.

Mandatory reporting records are confidential under law. As such, the reporter and additional administrative personnel involved in making the report should refrain from discussing the report with any other staff, students, parents, or members of the community. This restriction on discussing the report applies to communications with the family of the child who is the subject of a report of suspected child abuse. Instead, if a family member asks about a report, the staff member should tell the child’s family to contact DFCS to request information.

Reporting of Students Committing Certain Acts

Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a student at GCA committed any of the following acts on school property or at a school function must immediately report the act and the name of the student to the School Leader.

- Aggravated assault involving a firearm (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-5-21);
- Aggravated battery (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-5-24);
- Sexual offenses (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-6-1 et. seq.); \
- Carrying a weapon or long gun in an unauthorized location (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16- 11-127);
- Carrying weapons on school property, at a school function, or within a school safety zone (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-11-127.1);
- Illegal possession of a handgun by a person under 18 years of age (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-11-132); and
- Possession and other activities regarding marijuana and controlled substances (in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-13-30).

The recipient of this report who has reasonable cause to believe that the report is valid must make an oral report immediately to the appropriate police authority and district attorney. Any person making a report under this law who is acting in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability. Any person required to make a report under this law that knowingly and willfully fails to do so is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Conflict of Interest

Employees have an obligation to conduct business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. This policy establishes only the framework within which GCA wishes the business to operate. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide general direction so that employees can seek further clarification on issues related to the subject of acceptable standards of operation. Contact your Human Resource Director, Executive Director, and Superintendent for more information or questions about conflicts of interest.

Transactions with outside firms must be conducted within a framework established and controlled by GCA Board. Business dealings with outside firms should not result in unusual gains for those firms. Unusual gain refers to bribes, product bonuses, special fringe benefits, unusual price breaks, and other windfalls designed to ultimately benefit either, the employer, the employee, or both. Promotional plans that could be interpreted to involve unusual gain require specific executive-level approval.

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative as a result of GCA's business dealings. For the purposes of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

No "presumption of guilt" is created by the mere existence of a relationship with outside firms. However, if employees have any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or leases, it is imperative that they disclose to the Human Resource Director, Executive Director, and Superintendent as soon as possible the existence of any actual or potential conflict of interest so that safeguards can be established to protect all parties.

Personal gain may result not only in cases where an employee or relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which GCA does business, but also when an employee or relative receives any kickback, bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration because of any transaction or business dealings involving GCA. You must have the

approval of your Human Resource Director, Executive Director, and Superintendent prior to accepting a gift from any vendor, supplier, etc. The Executive Director, and/or Superintendent will consult with GCA counsel on any conflict that may violate state or federal laws or rules.

Employee Conduct

Georgia Cyber Academy strives to maintain a positive work environment where employees are treated with respect and where they respect the personal rights and property of fellow employees. All employees are expected to meet reasonable standards of work performance: Achieving goals; demonstrating a committed work ethic, meeting deadlines; having a positive effect on others; and continuously seeking ways to enhance and improve GCA.

Guidelines for Appropriate Conduct

Certain violations or acts of misconduct will not be tolerated and may lead to corrective action up to and including immediate termination of employment. Normally, when corrective action is required, it will be administered with the intent of helping employees resolve the problem. Examples of violations of GCA's policy or acts of misconduct are described below. This is by no means an exhaustive list:

- Dishonesty (including falsification or misrepresentation) of any type, providing incomplete, misleading, or incorrect information in connection with (1) the preparation of any of GCA's records, such as an employment application, employee timesheets, expense reports, or grade reporting, (2) the description of the products and services offered by GCA, or (3) leading decision makers to draw the wrong conclusions.
- Offer or acceptance of any form of payment that might be construed as a "bribe" or a "kickback."
- Misappropriation, abuse, destruction, or willful damage of equipment, information, and/or other property belonging to GCA, a vendor, employee, student, or family including but not limited to computer hardware and software.
- Removal of any of GCA's property or the property of others from GCA's premises without proper authorization.
- Unauthorized access to or use of information contained in databases, systems, and confidential or proprietary information, whether such information belongs to GCA or a third party.
- Absence from GCA without notifying a supervisor or obtaining authorization from GCA.
- Excessive absenteeism and/or tardiness.
- Use of sick leave for anything other than illness or a medical/dental procedure or service.
- Failure to report to work upon expiration of a holiday, vacation, or leave of absence.
- The use, possession, sale, or solicitation of illegal drugs, narcotics, or alcoholic beverages in the workplace, or working under the influence of these substances.
- Smoking or vaping on the premises of the workplace or at School-sponsored events and activities.
- Unauthorized use, possession, conveyance, or storage of any firearms, explosives, or other dangerous weapons on GCA's premises or at School-sponsored events.
- The use of profane, harassing, or threatening language or conduct toward co-workers, vendors, volunteers, visitors, students, families, or supervisors.
- Involvement in activities representing a conflict of interest.
- Serious performance issues or deficiencies.
- Fighting, coercing, intimidating, interfering with, or threatening bodily injury to others.
- Willful, deliberate, and/or repeated violation of GCA's workplace safety and security rules.
- Theft or attempted theft in any manner related to the workplace or GCA owned equipment and property.
- Participating in any form of discrimination or harassment or failing to report instances of the same to Human Resources.

- Violation of any term contained in the Employment Agreement you signed.
- Engaging in any outside employment without the prior knowledge and consent of GCA.
- Failure to comply with federal, state, local, and other laws, rules, and regulations in the performance of job duties.
- Felony conviction.
- Violation of any school policy, procedure, or protocol.
- Any illegal activities while on school time, at the GCA workplace, and/or at a schoolsponsored event or activity.
- Any action that, in the opinion of management, could result in harm or substantial damage to the business interests or reputation of GCA.
- Any action that, in the opinion of management, poses risk to GCA.
- Failure to meet licensing requirements to hold an active license/certification if a requirement of the position.
- Failure to comply with GCA policies, procedures, and protocols.
- Failure to follow any aspect of behavior, conduct, or ethics stated in this handbook.
- Failure to follow directives.
- Failure to perform assigned duties.
- Failure to perform duties as instructed.

This list is not exhaustive. Georgia Cyber Academy may, in its sole discretion, take any appropriate corrective action up to and including immediate termination of employment, depending on the circumstances of the situation, in the case of any of the acts or violations described above, as well as for other acts or behavior not mentioned here.

Interaction with Minors and Professional Judgement

Children are the central focus of our collective efforts, and their safety and security are paramount to all of us. GCA reserves the right to conduct background checks on any individual who has or could have access to our students, or their personal data, including but not limited to those who move into positions that grant this access, even on a temporary basis, and periodic post-hire background of all individuals. Vendors, volunteers, and parents may be subject to background checks should they interact with students on either a temporary or regular basis depending on oversight, program, services rendered, and function.

Non-professional relationships between GCA employees and students are not appropriate under any circumstances – whether consensual or not and regardless of the student’s age and, therefore, are prohibited. Should GCA deem a relationship has developed, GCA may take disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

School Personnel and Student Interaction Guidelines

Maintain a professional barrier between you and the scholars. You are the adult, the teacher and/or the professional; act like the expert, not like another one of the “kids”.

- Teachers should not give out personal email addresses or cell phone numbers, only their work email address.
- Refer scholars to the appropriate resource person for counseling and/or discussions about personal matters.
- Do not flirt with scholars.
- Do not participate in making inappropriate jokes or allow your scholars to make inappropriate jokes.

- Do not discuss your personal life or personal matters with scholars. Do not discuss your husband, wife, girlfriend, boyfriend, or dates with scholars.
- When transporting scholars, coordinate transportation ahead of time, and use school or mass transportation if possible. Parent/legal guardian permission and a signed waiver must be received prior to transporting students.
- In emergency situations:
 - If necessary, call a taxi for the scholar with permission from Department Head and parent/legal guardian.
 - If you must transport a scholar in your vehicle, ask a coworker to accompany you and get permission from your Department Head and parent/legal guardian.
- Avoid leaving your scholars unsupervised; have an alternate plan of action.
- Keep your hands and other parts of your body to yourself.
- Use verbal praise and reinforcement.
- Know your school policies and District and State laws governing corporal punishment.
- Establish and follow a consistent behavior plan.
- Treat each scholar with respect.
- Know the scholar's rights.
- Chaperone only school-sponsored functions. Do not socialize with scholars outside of your professional role and authorized function. If you chaperone a field trip, put in writing what your responsibilities will be.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages, smoke, vape, or take medication in front of your scholars, while representing GCA, or wearing your school identification, name badge, or uniform.
- Do not take children home with you for any reason.
- Do not make telephone calls, text, email, or write letters/cards/notes of a personal nature to scholars.
- Do not harass scholars; respect their differences. What you intend as humor, may, in fact, be cultural bias or harassment.
- Keep your co-workers and supervisors informed; work and communicate as a team, plan, and teach together.
- Communicate with parents and document your communication with parents and students.
- Dress and act appropriately and professionally. You are a role model in the community as well as in the school; be a good example for scholars.
- Use common sense and good judgment.
- Avoid putting yourself in a position where you must defend, explain, or justify your behavior or actions.
- Maintain a professional reputation in the community, even when you are off the job and be discreet.
- Maintain and display good character, good judgement, modest attire, and reputable actions in publicly posted pictures, videos, and postings, including social media platforms, blogs, and online posted pictures. Today students and parents are internet savvy and actively search the internet for information on their teachers, school administration, and/or leadership.
- Questionable public actions and displays, while legal and on one's personal time, may erode the authority to do your job effectively.

Additional guidelines for **Non-Instructional admin support staff, Parents, Volunteers, and Vendors**

- Do not discipline, counsel, or touch scholars. Notify an administrator if you believe a scholar is misbehaving.
- Do not flirt with scholars, staff members, and co-workers.
- Do not discuss your personal life or personal matters with scholars.
- Do not discuss personal matters with staff members, and co-workers.
- Know and follow your school's policy regarding reporting absences and tardiness. Be present and on time each day.

- Wear your identification, name badge, and uniform if your job requires it.
- Do not use profanity.

Dress Code

Georgia Cyber Academy has employees that work remotely, in-office, online, and in hybrid situations. The administration, faculty and staff of Georgia Cyber Academy are committed to providing our students with a safe, respectful learning environment, free from distractions. This includes both our virtual learning environment and in-person, school-sponsored events. With that in mind this policy applies to times you are in the office, online, or in-person fulfilling your job responsibilities and/or representing GCA in any capacity. Dress attire should be appropriate to the business/school function you are attending. Appropriateness of the attire is at the sole discretion of Human Resources and the Superintendent.

Administrative Offices

Monday – Thursday at the office is “Business Casual” and denim jeans are generally not permitted.*

Traditionally, the administrative office observes “Casual Fridays.” Denim jeans are permitted on Fridays. On Fridays, employees are permitted to wear dark denim jeans provided they do not have holes, worn areas, or shredded areas. Denim jeans must not be overly form fitting, overly embellished, stained, worn, or dirty. Denim jeans must be worn at the employee’s waist with a belt.

Monday through Friday, athletic shoes are permitted if they are clean, unstained, and in good condition (“like new”).

Shoes should be close toed, unless wearing dress sandals.

*Monday through Friday, employees are permitted to wear denim jeans if they are paired with a GCA shirt unless otherwise instructed. GCA shirt must fit appropriately and must not be faded, stained, dirty, ripped, altered, have holes, or be overly form fitting. Denim jeans must not have holes, worn areas, or shredded areas. Denim jeans must not be overly form fitting, overly embellished, stained, worn, or dirty. Denim jeans must be worn at the employee’s waist with a belt.

Expectations & Virtual Zoom Meetings/Conferences/Training

When participating in virtual class sessions, Zoom/Teams/Jigsaw/Google meetings, administering online tests, attending online conferences, and/or attending online training/professional development, administration, faculty, and staff are expected to dress in a manner that is supportive of learning and appropriate to a professional environment. Clothing and accessories which interfere with, distract from, or further impede student learning or are deemed not professional are not allowed.

The following rules apply to ALL faculty and staff dress regardless of the work setting.

Length and manner that garments must be worn, if the garment is allowed:

- Garments must be clean and may not be faded, ripped, have holes, or be stained.
- Skirt and dress length must be no shorter than two inches above the knee.
- Shirts, blouses, tops, sweaters, and dresses must fit appropriately and must not be overly form fitting or low cut.
- Shirts, blouses, sweaters, tops, and dresses must cover the abdomen, cleavage, sides, back, and shoulders.

- Shirts, blouses, sweaters, tops, and dresses should not expose undergarments or excessive cleavage when leaning forward.
- Shirts, blouses, sweaters, and tops must also cover the waistband of pants, shorts, or skirts, with no midriff or cleavage visible while standing, raising arms, or while bending over.
- Denim jeans must not have holes, worn areas, or shredded areas.
- Pants, shorts, jeans, and skirts must be worn at the body's natural waist. The garment should remain at the employee's waist when bending over, sitting, or squatting down. No undergarments or skin from waist to mid-thigh should be exposed at any time.
- Pants, shorts, jeans, and skirts that have belt loops should be worn with a belt that is cinched at the body's natural waist.
- Shorts, if allowed, must be of an appropriate length to fully cover the employee's bottom when leaning over while bent at the waist. No undergarments or skin from waist to mid- thigh should be exposed at any time regardless of position. Form fitting shorts such as bike shorts are not allowed.
- Running shorts if split at the sides or too short are not allowed.
- If leggings, stretch pants, stirrup pants, or riding pants are worn, a loose or oversized shirt, blouse, top, or sweater that falls to at least mid-thigh in front and completely covers the individuals bottom when bending over must be worn.
- Tights are only permitted with skirts and dresses of appropriate length.
- Hoods of garments such as hoodies and sweatshirts are not allowed to be worn on the head.
- Jewelry should be kept to a minimum based on the event.

Clothing and accessories may not display any of the following:

- Racial or ethnic names, slurs, or images
- Hate Speech
- Gang Affiliation
- Curse, cuss, or swear words.
- Vulgar, sexually explicit, or suggestive language and/or images.
- Products such as alcohol, tobacco, vaping, marijuana, or illegal drugs. This includes names, language, images, and/or slogans.
- Political parties, affiliations, and/or figures names, slogans, and/or images as in our professional roles we do not solicit or endorse political parties and figures.
- Images or language that depict or promote violence.
- Images, names, or language that depict weapons.

Prohibited articles of clothing and accessories include but are not limited to the following:

- Any articles that may reasonably be considered a safety hazard or potential weapon.
- Garments that expose the midriff, cleavage, shoulders, back, or skin from waist to fingertip of longest finger or to two inches above the knee, whichever is longer.
- See-through or mesh clothing is not permitted.
- Halter style tops, strapless tops, tank tops, and tops with spaghetti straps are not permitted.
- Halter style dresses, tank style dresses, strapless dresses, and dresses with spaghetti straps are not permitted.
- Dresses or skirts cannot be overly form fitting. Bandage or bodycon dresses are not permitted.
- Pajamas, sleepwear, and loungewear.
- Non-GCA t-shirts
- Workout and athletic wear, unless specified for a specific event.
- Shorts, unless specified for a specific event.
- Jeggings

- Bike shorts
- Visible undergarments
- Hats, caps, visors, and other head coverings should not be worn except for religious or medical purposes.
- Bandanas
- Flip flops or Crocs
- Slides (like pool or beach shoes or Birkenstock styled shoes)
- Slippers

Special Events

Information Sessions, Meet and Greets, Fun Days, Discovery Days, BOY and EOY Events, Field Trips, and Class Outings – these events will require you to dress accordingly. If you have any doubt about appropriate attire please contact the events coordinator, Principal, Manager, Director, Human Resources, or Superintendent for clarification. In some circumstances, hats, shorts, and/or athletic wear may be appropriate, but written approval must be obtained.

Georgia Cyber Academy administration, faculty or staff members reserve the right to determine what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate dress for the school and office setting. In matters of opinion, the judgement of school administration shall prevail. If attire is deemed inappropriate you may be asked to obtain appropriate attire or be sent home.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Internet Code of Conduct

Access to the Internet has been provided to staff members for the benefit of the organization and its clients. Every employee has a responsibility to maintain and enhance GCA's public image, and to use the Internet in a productive manner. To ensure that all employees are responsible, productive Internet users and are protecting GCA's public image, the following guidelines have been established for using the Internet.

Acceptable Use of the Internet

Employees accessing the Internet represent GCA. All communications should be for professional reasons. Employees are responsible for seeing that the Internet is used in an effective, ethical, and lawful manner. Internet Relay Chat channels may be used to conduct official school business, or to gain technical or analytical advice. Databases may be accessed for information as needed. E-mail may be used for business contacts. Employees should always respect the finite capacity of GCA's systems and limit use of the Internet so as not to consume an unreasonable amount of those resources or to interfere unreasonably with the activity of other users. The reasonableness of any particular use will be evaluated in the context of the relevant circumstances.

Unacceptable Use of the Internet

The Internet should not be used for personal gain, advancement of individual views, or to collude with others to incite a negative or toxic environment. Solicitation of non-school business, or any use of the Internet for personal gain, is strictly prohibited. This prohibition includes the use of the Internet for the sale, auction, or barter of goods or services for personal businesses (whether incorporated or not), such as consulting businesses, stores, or other sales of goods. Use of the Internet must not disrupt the operation of the GCA network or the network of other users. It must not interfere with your productivity.

Social Networking

Social Networking is an important part of our current culture. We encourage employees to have separate work and personal sites, so that clients, employees, customers, families are not exposed to the personal lives of employees. Additionally, the personal use of social networking be used during regular business hours is strictly prohibited.

Employee groups set up to discuss GCA business must be authorized by the department's head or district leadership. Additionally, the department head must be a member of all GCA employee groups formed. Human resources and District Leadership must be granted access upon request.

Communications

Each employee is responsible for the content of all text, audio, or images he or she places on or sends over the Internet. Fraudulent, harassing, or obscene messages are prohibited. All messages communicated over the Internet should have your name attached. No messages will be transmitted under an assumed name. Users may not attempt to obscure the origin of any message. Information published on the Internet should not violate or infringe upon the rights of others. No abusive, profane, or offensive language or images may be transmitted through the system.

Employees who wish to express personal opinions on the Internet are to use non-school Internet systems, social media, emails, and platforms.

Software

To prevent computer viruses from being transmitted through the system, there will be no unauthorized downloading of any software. All software downloads require prior management approval.

Copyright Issues

Staff members using the Internet may not transmit copyrighted materials belonging to entities other than GCA. One lawful copy of copyrighted material may be downloaded for use in research. Users are not permitted to copy, transfer, rename, add, or delete information or programs belonging to other users, unless given express permission to do so by the owner. Failure to observe copyright or license agreements may result in disciplinary action from GCA, up to and including immediate termination, or legal action by the copyright owner. Use of the Internet to defeat, interfere with or circumvent any security measures, controls, accounts, record keeping systems, or other "standard technical measures" used by copyright holders to identify and protect their rights is prohibited.

Security

All messages created, sent, or retrieved over the Internet are the property of GCA, and should be considered public information. GCA reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the computer system, as deemed necessary and appropriate. Internet messages are public communication and are not private. All communications, including text and images, can be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver.

Harassment

Harassment of any kind is prohibited. The term "harassment" includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, citizenship status, pregnancy, disability, age, genetic information, military status or status as a Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran, marital status, civil union or registered domestic partner status, gender (including gender identity), sexual orientation or bankruptcy in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws.

Internal Communication Confidentiality

Internal staff information, emails, communications, reports, plans, documents, webinars, schedules, files, lists, spreadsheets, recordings, etc. may not be copied, shared, forwarded, verbally communicated, shown, or transmitted to non-intended recipients or outside parties without prior District Director or Executive level approval. To do so without prior written approval is strictly prohibited and grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Granting access to meetings, allowing other non-participants to listen in, or recording meetings and then forwarding the recording to non-participants or outside parties without prior District Director or Executive level approval is strictly prohibited and grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Recordings

Notice needs to be given to all parties if conversations are being recorded unless the mode being use for the meeting visibly depicts that a recording is in process or the party taking minutes is clearly present.

Violations

Violations of any guidelines listed herein may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination. If necessary, GCA will advise appropriate legal officials of any illegal violations.

Gifts and Favors

No employee shall solicit and/or accept for personal use, or for the personal use of others, any gift, favor, loan, gratuity, reward, promise of future employment, or any other thing of monetary value that might influence, or appear to influence, the judgment or conduct of the employee in the performance of his or her job.

Employees can accept occasional unsolicited courtesy gifts or favors (such as business lunches, tickets to sporting events or cultural events, holiday baskets, flowers, etc.) as long as the gifts or favors have a market value under \$25, are customary in the industry, and do not influence or appear to influence the judgment or conduct of the employee. Please discuss exceptions to this amount with your supervisor, Human Resources, and Superintendent.

Employees are not to give, offer, or promise directly or indirectly anything of value, including information, to any representative of a customer, a potential customer, a vendor or potential vendor, financial institution, or potential financial institution with whom GCA has or may have a business relationship.

Workplace Dating and Consensual Relationships

Visually, verbally, and physically, GCA employees spend enormous amounts of time together. If your mind wanders from the task at hand to thoughts of a romantic relationship with another GCA employee, let the following strategy guide your actions:

Should you decide to pursue another GCA employee romantically, and they say “no,” do not ask again, as a second attempt will be a violation of the Anti-Harassment Policy. Additionally, there is to be no dating, romantic or amorous relationship within a reporting relationship, regardless of whether such activities are consensual by any or all the parties. Pursuing a subordinate is grounds for termination of employment.

Should two employees be involved and become assigned to a single reporting line, both employees need to inform Human Resources so that the integrity of the reporting relationship can be maintained, and the conflict-of-interest situation can be resolved.

This policy applies equally for in-person and online contact.

Workplace Violence

Any employee who feels that he or she has been threatened should immediately report the incident to their supervisor and Human Resources.

If you observe anyone exhibiting threatening behavior or making threatening statements, warn others in the area and immediately notify a School Official and Human Resources.

Also, it is imperative that you stay away from the person exhibiting threatening behavior. Depending upon the level of concern, 911 may be called immediately. Never attempt to confront any person exhibiting threatening behavior.

If you have reason to believe that events in your personal life could result in acts of violence occurring at work, you are strongly urged to confidentially discuss the issue with Human Resources, so that a prevention plan can be developed to keep both you and your co-workers safe.

Anti-Harassment and Discrimination

All forms of harassment and discrimination are strictly prohibited.

Georgia Cyber Academy values a professional environment where each employee is treated with respect and dignity. GCA expressly prohibits any form of harassment based on sex (with or without sexual conduct), race, color, religion, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, or status as a veteran, or based on any other protected activity.

To create a productive work environment free of bias, it is GCA's policy that conduct by any employee that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another employee's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile work environment, will not be tolerated. It is important to remember that even humor, when interpreted by another as offensive, may constitute a form of harassment. Any employee found to have engaged in harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. This policy applies to workplace conduct, conduct at school-sponsored functions or while on school business, and to employees at all levels and positions within GCA. Individuals involved in a marital, dating, or comparable relationship will not be permitted to serve in supervisor/subordinate roles.

Any form of harassment, whether direct or indirect must be brought to the attention of Human Resources immediately. Should the reporting of any form of harassment not be immediately reported to Human Resources, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including termination.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is prohibited. Please refer to the Sexual Harassment Policy in the Appendix Section of this handbook for our full policy.

Retaliation against an employee for truthfully complaining about or reporting prohibited behaviors will not be tolerated. Should an employee believe they have been sexually harassed or been witness to sexual harassment, they should immediately contact Human Resources.

Other Types of Harassment

In addition to sexual harassment, the School prohibits all other harassment based on age, race, color, national origin, gender (including pregnancy, childbirth or medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth), gender

identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, veteran status, military status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

Progressive Discipline

GCA wants you to be successful in your job and we will provide you with the necessary tools, support, and guidance. There are times where the performance of an employee does not meet the needs or expectations of GCA. Where appropriate, a policy of progressive employee discipline will be followed by supervisors.

Progressive discipline provides managers/supervisors with a consistent and fair process for handling disciplinary issues and protects the legal rights of the employee and employer. Managers/supervisors should contact and work with Human Resources when determining the level of discipline, if any, which may be required.

The following steps should be taken for progressive discipline:

- Verbal Counseling - The first step in GCA's progressive discipline policy is "verbal counseling." This is a verbal warning to an employee that their conduct is unacceptable, and that repeated or continued failure to conform their conduct or performance to GCA standards will result in more severe disciplinary action. A record of the notice of the verbal warning may be made and retained in the employee's personnel file.
- Written Warning - The second step is a "written warning." This warning will be a formal counseling statement that will describe the unacceptable conduct of performance of the employee and specify needed changes or improvements. This statement will:
 - Detail the areas of deficiency, specific occurrences, and prior discussions on the topic.
 - Provide areas in which an employee must improve their performance.
 - Discuss the importance of this position within GCA and why stronger performance is needed.
 - Include a timeline for improvement to occur and may involve frequent meetings to measure the progress along the way.
 - At the end of the timeline, the performance will be evaluated again, and a determination on next steps will be discussed.

A copy of the written warning will be retained in the employee's personnel file.

Termination

The final step in the disciplinary procedure is the termination of the employee. If an employee fails to conform their conduct or performance to the standards or expectations GCA requires, GCA may, at its sole discretion, terminate the employee's employment.

Exceptions

For serious offenses, such as violating a law, dishonesty, willful defiance of directives, fighting, theft, insubordination, threat of violence, possession of weapons, the sale or possession of drugs or abuse of alcohol on school property, etc., termination may be the first and only disciplinary step taken. Any step or steps of the disciplinary process may be skipped at the discretion of GCA after investigation and analysis of the total situation, past practices, and circumstances. In general, oral warnings should, at the next infraction, be followed by a written warning, followed at the next infraction by discharge. This is especially true in those cases where the time interval between offenses is short and the employee demonstrates a poor desire to improve their performance.

While GCA will generally take disciplinary action in a progressive manner, it reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to decide whether and what disciplinary action will be taken in any situation.

Internal and External Communications

Representing Your School

According to the FTC Guide Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising recently issued by the Federal Trade Commission, employees should disclose their affiliation in a clear and conspicuous way whenever their participation in social media venues can be construed as an endorsement of their employer's products, activities, or campaigns.

We require all employees who are publishing or commenting, in any way, on topics that are associated with GCA, to start their contribution with a disclaimer of their affiliation (e.g.: "Disclaimer: I work for GCA"). Also, if you are blogging about GCA topics make sure you include a visible, clear, easy to find disclaimer (e.g.: "Everything posted on this site is my personal opinion. It is not endorsed by GCA, my employer, my school, and it does not necessarily represent the views of GCA.")

Disclosures must appear within each post, Tweet, or status update that contains an endorsement or testimonial. The FTC Guide define endorsements as: any advertising message (including verbal statements, demonstrations, or depictions of the name, signature, likeness, or other identifying personal characteristics of an individual or the name or seal of an organization) that consumers are likely to believe reflects the opinions, beliefs, findings, or experiences of a party other than a sponsoring advertiser.

Code of Conduct

In all interactions, including within social media platforms or in blogs, make sure you are not violating the law and be aware of how your actions may reflect on your career, employer, and business partners. GCA's Internet Code of Conduct applies to social media venues as well:

- GCA does not block access to social media websites. However, if using social media interferes with any of your work duties and/or responsibilities, GCA reserves the right to disallow such participation and block social media sites.
- Any kind of harassment or discrimination will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- Respect the confidentiality of business data, activities, and internal communications and reports. Privacy requirements must be adhered to at all times. School information, especially student information, is not to be shared without the express and written permission of the Executive Director and/or Superintendent. Employees will be held accountable for violations of FERPA and other laws, rules, regulations, and policies concerning disclosure of confidential information.
- Be aware of and respect copyright, no matter how tempting it may be to share various pieces of information across social media venues, blogs, and internet platforms.

In addition, employees are requested to:

- Abstain from referring to business partners and vendors in social media communications.
- Never comment on legal matters or litigations involving GCA. If asked for your opinion on these matters, please refer the person to GCA's official statements, the Executive Director, and/or Superintendent.
- Use official communication channels and HR processes appropriately for addressing internal issues and solving problems.
- Refrain from attacking fellow employees, students, or parents. However, you may respectfully and professionally disagree with school actions, policies, or management.

Consideration Toward Community and Peers

Part of the appeal of social media participation comes from the sense of community and the direct connection the Web allows people to have. To nurture and preserve them, we recommend the following:

- Always respect the members of the community you have engaged with.
- Always consider and respect other people's right to privacy.
- Always be respectful in your engagement and use appropriate tone and language.

As stated above, the purpose of this policy is to protect Georgia Cyber Academy's reputation and prevent the disclosure of confidential information. It is not Georgia Cyber Academy's intent to interfere with its employees' legal rights. Whenever state or federal law governs an area of social media participation, Georgia Cyber Academy policies should be interpreted as to comply with them.

Nothing contained in this policy or handbook is meant or designed in any way to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of their rights guaranteed by Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act.

Communication and Information Technology Policy

Georgia Cyber Academy understands that communication is the bridge to all relationships. Without communication, there is no relationship. Students are more successful when there is a positive relationship between school (teachers, interventionists, counselors, coaches, social workers, family engagement liaisons, administration) and home. GCA staff are expected to remain professional and promote a positive environment when communicating with families and staff. As a representative of GCA, this includes supporting and speaking positively of all GCA policies, procedures, protocols, plans, initiatives, and activities with GCA families and outside parties.

Documenting Communication

All communication (i.e. email or phone) between a teacher, student, parent and/or learning coach should be documented within twenty-four (24) hours of its occurrence.

Availability

Employees must be available by Zoom, phone, email, and other predetermined communication methods during core business hours. (Core hours are defined as Monday through Friday 8:00 through 4:00 p.m.) Employees will be available for meetings, professional development, testing, and other activities during that time and may need to be available after 4pm as deemed reasonably necessary by GCA and the employee's supervisor. GCA staff are required to reply to all email and voicemail messages within one business day.

Use of Information Technology

It is the intent of Georgia Cyber Academy to provide the communication and information technology systems necessary for the conduct of its business. Employees are expected to adhere to proper use of all communication and information technology systems. These include, but are not limited to, Zoom, Jigsaw, Teams, Google, the telephone, e-mail, instant messages, texting, facsimile, Internet, school intranet, voice mail, computer terminals, modems, and systems software. Employees are permitted use of School property and must comply with School policies and procedures regarding its use.

Texting from personal cell phones should not be used to conduct any forms of official business with families, students, or staff, this includes, but is not limited to, informing management of being late for work or not being able to work. Phone calls should be made in these cases with a follow up email to document. Nevertheless, any such text messages that involve the official business of Georgia Cyber Academy by law are the property of GCA and are required by law to be kept and maintained by the employee and GCA.

The communication systems are owned and operated by Georgia Cyber Academy and are to be used for the business of Georgia Cyber Academy. Employees should have no expectation of privacy of any correspondence, messages, or information in the systems. Georgia Cyber Academy employee communications, files, and documents are subject to public records requests and review by school leadership.

Georgia Cyber Academy reserves the right to access and disclose all such messages sent for any purpose. The issuance or availability of a password or other means of access is intended only to assure appropriate confidentiality of files and information from persons not authorized to access those files or information. They do not suggest privacy with respect to GCA's rights described in this section. All such messages, regardless of content or the intent of the sender, are a form of School correspondence and are subject to the same internal and external regulation, security, and scrutiny as any other school correspondence. E-mail communications must be written following customary business communications practices, as used in School correspondence.

E-mail communications are official internal School communications, which may be subject to summons in legal proceedings and are required by state open records laws to be kept and maintained by both GCA and employee. Work-related messages should be directed to the affected employee(s) rather than sending a global message to all employees. Georgia Cyber Academy also reserves the right to monitor, without notice, the activity, and accounts of individual users of GCA's technology resources. Such monitoring can include, but is not limited to, reviewing, copying, accessing, or archiving any information, data, files, or materials stored on, transmitted through, or created on or through the use of GCA's technology resources.

Georgia Cyber Academy communication systems shall not be used as a forum to promote religious or political causes, or an illegal activity. Offensive or improper messages or opinions; transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, cartoons, or other such items; or messages that may be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, citizenship status, pregnancy, disability, age, genetic information, military status or status as a Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran, marital status, civil union or registered domestic partner status, gender (including gender identity), sexual orientation or bankruptcy in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws. is also prohibited on Georgia Cyber Academy communication systems.

Employees shall not attempt to gain access to another employee's personal communications system and messages. Georgia Cyber Academy, however, reserves the right to access an employee's messages at any time, without notice to the employee.

Any violation of these guidelines may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employee Acceptable Use Policy

GCA adheres to the federal requirements and guidelines stipulated under TITLE XVII—CHILDREN'S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT (CIPA). Visit <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act> to view this document in its entirety. Overall, GCA's policy of internet safety is enforced to and includes measures that block or filter internet access for both minors and adults to certain visual depictions. These include visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors.

Any violation of the prohibitions set forth in these policies may result in disciplinary actions, including, without limitation, termination of employment.

Social Media

Georgia Cyber Academy is committed to building on our culture of accountability, transparency, and operating with the utmost integrity and ethics in everything we do. These commitments extend to how we interact with

the public and each other and apply to interactions on social media as well. Social Media provides a valuable and important way to communicate and share opinions and information. However, the use of social media also presents certain risks and carries certain responsibilities. GCA has established the following policy for its employees' use of social media.

Social media is any means of communicating or posting information that facilitates back and forth communications over the Internet. Social media applies not only to current "big names" such as Facebook and Twitter, but also to other platforms that include a feature for user interactions. Platforms such as YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, blogs, TikTok, personal websites, chat rooms, message boards, and wikis are all part of social media. As technology advances, the types of platforms will change and grow.

Whether you are an authorized spokesperson for GCA or not, you must identify yourself as a GCA employee in any posts relating to GCA securities, products, services, and information regardless of whether you are using your real name, a different name or moniker, or even anonymously. The disclosure must be clear (e.g., "I work for GCA.") and conspicuous (e.g., do not use a small font or a color that will make it difficult to read).

Be clear that opinions belong to you. Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for GCA unless you are designated as such by the appropriate school official. If the topic of a post is GCA, it is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the view of GCA."

You cannot take any action to initiate or to accept a connection between any of your social media accounts and any student (other than your own relatives) in any education program managed by GCA. If your job responsibilities with GCA include regular interaction with GCA Students, you may, if permitted under the terms of service of the applicable social media platform and any applicable state regulations and school policies, set up a professional page or account with which to initiate and/or accept connections between yourself and GCA Students enrolled in GCA to which you provide service. Such accounts must identify your affiliation with GCA, have Department Director access/oversight, have prior written approval to set up, and behaviors/communications must adhere to the GCA code of ethics, policies, and procedures in all communications. When you are no longer employed by GCA, you must deactivate or, if possible, delete the professional page or account.

Do not post inappropriate comments and information. Ensure that your postings are consistent with, but not limited to, GCA's Communication and Information Technology Policy, Interactions with Minors, Equipment Use, Harassment Policy, and all requirements protecting trade secrets and confidential business information.

Inappropriate postings that include confidential information regarding GCA's business activities or that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may be grounds for disciplinary action and/or termination.

Internal staff information, emails, communications, reports, plans, documents, webinars, schedules, files, lists, spreadsheets, recordings, etc. may not be copied, shared, forwarded, verbally communicated, shown, or transmitted to non-intended recipients or outside parties without prior District Director or Executive level approval. To do so without prior written approval is strictly prohibited and grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

You are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your managers and/or Human Resources than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. We encourage you to contact those people. Nevertheless, if you decide to post anything untrue, confidential, complaints or criticism, and you post anything

that could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, bullying, or intimidating, or that might violate any GCA policy or the Employee Handbook, you could be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts that could harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of any status or characteristic protected by law or GCA policy.

Do not lobby or campaign in your capacity as a GCA Employee. Do not engage in lobbying or political campaigning in your capacity as a GCA employee. You should take measures to ensure that there is no perception of GCA involvement or support of your personal lobbying or political activities, such as by posting a disclaimer to the effect of "the views expressed here represent my own and not those of GCA." You may never use GCA equipment, assets, or work time for such activities. You are prohibited from wearing GCA clothing, accessories, badges, and identification and/or displaying items that have the GCA logo when engaging in lobbying or political campaigning activities and/or communications.

Respect the rights of others. Do not use, copy, or publish intellectual property belonging to GCA or any other company or person unless you have the legal right to do so. Examples include School branding, logos, trademarks, photos, essays, video, music, and other proprietary information. Always respect the privacy rights of other persons. Do not share any personal information on social media that could identify a student, other employee, vendor, and/or client of GCA's.

Be honest and accurate. Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news about GCA, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, deleting postings can be searched.

Be mindful that others can gain information by looking at multiple social media platforms. While individual posts may not disclose confidential information in themselves, you should be mindful of what confidential information can be gained by looking at the information you post across social media platforms or over a period of time. Consider the following example: Employee is identified as a GCA employee on LinkedIn. The employee posts on Twitter that she is anxious to meet with a vendor to evaluate exciting new software for her job. Finally, the employee later "checks in" on Facebook at the headquarters of the vendor. While none of the individual posts may have contained confidential information, someone could look at all three together and conclude that GCA was considering a software purchase from the vendor. In some situations, that information could be a disclosure of confidential information. Therefore, employees should keep in mind the information posted on the internet collectively, and not simply post-by-post. Posting of confidential information is subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Media Relations Policy

All media inquiries regarding GCA and its operation must be immediately referred to the Superintendent who is authorized to make and/or approve public statements regarding GCA. If you wish to write or publish an article, paper, or other publication on behalf of GCA, you must first obtain approval. Only authorized individuals will respond to media requests. Responding to a media request without authorization of the Superintendent may result in termination.

Solicitation and Distribution of Literature

It is the intent of GCA to maintain a proper business environment and prevent interference with work and inconvenience to others from solicitations and/or distribution of literature.

Group meetings for solicitation purposes, distributing literature, or circulating petitions in work areas are prohibited, unless approved by Directors, Human Resources, and the Superintendent as a school sponsored event. The following guidelines will apply throughout GCA.

Employees will not engage in any solicitation of other employees for any purpose whatsoever during working hours or in work areas. This includes selling items such as make-up, jewelry, plastic containers, etc. GCA facilities may not be used as a meeting place that involves solicitation and/or distribution of literature. Trespassing, soliciting, and/or distributing literature by non-employees is prohibited on school premises and/or at school-sponsored events. Use of school equipment for solicitation purposes, distributing literature, and/or circulating petitions is prohibited.

Internal Communication Confidentiality

Internal staff information, emails, communications, reports, plans, documents, webinars, schedules, files, lists, spreadsheets, recordings, etc. may not be copied, shared, forwarded, verbally communicated, shown, or transmitted to non-intended recipients or outside parties without prior District Director or Executive level approval. To do so without prior written approval is strictly prohibited and grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Granting access to meetings, allowing other non-participants to listen in, or recording meetings and then forwarding the recording to non-participants or outside parties without prior District Director or Executive level approval is strictly prohibited and grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Public Open Records Requests

As a Georgia public charter school, GCA is required to respond to requests for public records in a timely manner. All requests for public records, whether from the media or otherwise, must be immediately referred to the Superintendent, who is authorized to respond to public records requests. Only authorized individuals will respond to public records requests. Responding to a public records request without authorization of the Superintendent may result in termination.

School Property, Computers, and Online Resources

To ensure the safety and welfare of employees and invitees, GCA reserves the right, on reasonable suspicion that school policy is being violated, to conduct searches or inspections, which includes, but is not limited to, employees' work areas, desks, and any other property located on school premises, worksites, virtual platforms, computers, phones, and communication systems. Entry on school premises or worksites constitutes consent to searches or inspections. Use of GCA property, platforms, and software constitutes consent to searches or inspections.

Georgia Cyber Academy issues equipment such as computers, monitors, printers, and accessories to GCA employees and contractors herein called "Users." Users shall exercise appropriate professional judgment and common sense when using GCA's computers, equipment, and accessories.

All computers, monitors, printers, equipment, and accessories are property of GCA and are provided to Users for a period as deemed appropriate by GCA. As a condition of the use of GCA's computers and equipment, Users must comply with all the following:

- Users are expected to take reasonable measures to protect computers, equipment and accessories from damage and theft.
- Users will provide access to any GCA owned computer or accessories they have been assigned upon GCA's request.

- Users understand that GCA issued computers and communications conducted on GCA equipment are monitored at all times and that nothing on GCA issued computers and devices is considered private.
- General Computer Guidelines
- GCA personnel are responsible for protecting their GCA issued computer and equipment from loss or theft and for protecting the information it contains. These rules are provided to assist in assuring that GCA issued computers and equipment are always secure. All conceivable situations cannot be covered in this document. Users must realize that common sense should be the guide when faced with unusual or unforeseen situations.

Stolen Computer

If your computer is stolen, report it immediately to the local police department and your immediate supervisor. Once a police report is filed, provide a copy of the report to Human Resources. A replacement computer will only be issued after the appropriate documentation has been received by GCA. Follow GCA procedures to obtain a new one.

Equipment Use Policy

Computers, printers, monitors, document cameras, computer accessories, Title Programs equipment/property, networks, platforms, software, copy machines, telephones, hot spots, pagers, voice mail, and E-mail systems are the property of GCA. These tools and access to the Internet are intended to be used only for business purposes of GCA and not for personal purposes of the employees or for inappropriate uses. Employees should not allow others to use their school issued computer for work or personal purposes. For purposes of this policy, "others" refers to other GCA staff, family members, clients, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or anyone that is not the employee.

Employees are expected to gain access to all educational records and resources and perform all work duties on their school-issued equipment. With the prior approval from their supervisor, an employee may be permitted to use equipment other than school-issued equipment to gain access to educational records and resources and perform work duties.

Employees should have no expectation of privacy in using school equipment. Passwords, encryption, or other techniques that prevent GCA from accessing information are prohibited. Employees shall not use unauthorized codes, passwords, software, or other means to gain access to mailboxes of others. Nor shall employees disclose their codes or passwords to others. The fact that an employee has a password does not mean that an employee should have an expectation of privacy. All documents or messages created, sent, received, stored, or downloaded by employees are subject to monitoring to determine whether any outsiders have gained unauthorized access to the systems or whether any violations of school policy have occurred.

On-line services and the Internet may be accessed only by employees specifically authorized by GCA, and all appropriate security measures must be taken to maintain the integrity of our system. Employees' on-line use should be limited to work related activities. In addition, employees should not duplicate or download any software or materials that are copyrighted, patented, trademarked, or otherwise identified as intellectual property.

Employees should ensure that no personal correspondence appears to be an official communication of GCA, since employees may be perceived as representatives of GCA and, therefore, may damage or create liability for GCA. All outgoing messages, whether by mail, facsimile, E-mail, Internet transmission or any other means must be authorized, accurate, appropriate, and work related.

Employees should not participate in web-based surveys without prior authorization. Employees should not use GCA's address for receiving personal mail or use school stationary or postage for personal letters.

All materials, messages, including text messages, and information created, transmitted, or stored via computer, electronic mail, regular mail, voice mail, or any other means are the property of GCA and may be accessed by authorized personnel. GCA reserves the right to monitor these systems. Users should have no expectation of privacy with respect to materials and information created or transmitted or stored on these systems. Use of computers, voicemail, e-mail, social media platforms, the GCA website, all other communication systems, and software platforms by an employee grants consent to management to monitor any usage or mail messages.

Software Security

The purchase of software is actually the purchase of a license to use that software. It rarely implies permission to make or distribute copies. According to copyright laws, any individual, company or corporate entity found guilty of illegal reproduction of software can be subject to civil damages and criminal penalties, including fines and imprisonment. GCA prohibits the use of "freeware," "shareware" and other software which was not properly licensed by GCA.

Employees shall use the software only in accordance with the license agreement.

Computer "viruses," which can degrade an operating system and destroy data files, have been found to exist in software obtained through PC bulletin boards and shareware (example: copying a friend's software). Precautions, such as only using software obtained from established vendors, significantly reduce the possibility of "viruses" infecting a computer and the potential for the "virus" from being uploaded into a network. Knowingly downloading viruses is prohibited as is deactivating virus scanning software.

Employees should not bring outside software (or discs) on school premises, nor should school software (or discs) be used on personal or other business computers, without specific authorization. Employees learning of any misuse of software or related documentation within GCA shall notify the Superintendent. Software designed to destroy data, provide unauthorized access to school computers or to disrupt equipment is strictly prohibited.

Software, applications, and work products are the property of GCA. Software may not be installed, copied nor deleted from the system except as authorized by the Superintendent. Original programs created by or on behalf of GCA are subject to copyright protection by GCA. Under the copyright laws, GCA is the owner of all copyrights in work prepared by employees within the scope of their employment and in works specially ordered or commissioned from outside parties under a written agreement calling for the transfer of copyright interest.

Georgia Cyber Academy provides a plethora of online resources for staff and students. In the event that a staff member would like to use a resource that is not sanctioned (available to the district via Canvas, Clever, or another GCA platform), staff must gain approval.

In order to gain approval, staff should submit a "New Program" ticket to GCA's help desk, found [HERE](#). Once submitted, staff should expect a maximum two (2) week review period in which the technology and curriculum teams will research the program for security and instructional relevance before approving or denying the request.

Return of School Related Property

All confidential information and documentation, copies of such information and documentation, passwords, equipment, keys, fobs, and tangible property are and shall always remain the sole and exclusive property of GCA.

Accordingly, when an employee's employment has been terminated, for whatever reason, the employee shall promptly return to GCA the following:

- All confidential information and documents, records, lists, spreadsheets, manuals, procedures, books, workbooks, notebooks, and any other documentation in any form whatsoever (including, but not limited to, written, audio, video, or electronic information) containing any information pertaining to GCA, including any and all copies of such documentation in the employee's possession or control regardless of whether such documentation was prepared or compiled by the employee, GCA, other employees of GCA, representatives, agents, vendors, or independent contractors of GCA. Employees will not retain any original, copy, description, document, data base, or other form of media that contains or relates to any confidential information whether produced by the employee or otherwise.
- All equipment or tangible property entrusted to the employee by GCA must be returned by the employee upon termination.
- The employee shall not delete or destroy any information, confidential or otherwise from any equipment owned by GCA.
- The employee shall permanently delete or destroy all copies of confidential information from all computers, discs, CD-ROMs, tapes, and other media owned or used by or accessible to the Employee, excluding equipment owned by GCA.
- Once an employee is terminated, access is no longer granted for the employee to access personal records left on GCA computers and equipment.

Employee agrees and understands that he/she must return all GCA issued or paid for Property, including but not limited to, their laptop, printer, monitor, document camera, iPad, hot spot, phone, and any other equipment in the same or similar condition in which such was received by Employee, minus normal wear and tear.

Employee agrees that he/she will be responsible for any damage to or failure to return GCA issued or paid for Property, including but not limited to, their laptop, printer, monitor, document camera, iPad, hot spot, phone, and any other equipment that is in excess of normal wear and tear.

Employee agrees that GCA may, in its sole discretion, choose to withhold the employee's last salary check until its property has been returned or it has recouped the cost for damage of any such property.

All employees upon termination of employment must comply with this policy and will be required to execute an agreement acknowledging that they have complied with the policy. The agreement can be found in your Employee Agreement signed each year. The signed original will be placed in the employee's personnel file. Employees will need to contact Human Resources to arrange a time to return school property.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMPLAINTS

General Complaint Resolution Procedure

Georgia Cyber Academy treats complaints about accounting, internal accounting controls, auditing matters, questionable financial practices, fraud, discrimination, harassment, and unethical behavior seriously and expeditiously. Employees may confidentially submit such complaints for review by the GCA administration. While GCA cannot guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of the employee, to the extent possible, GCA will attempt to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of an employee, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate review. GCA abides by all laws that prohibit retaliation against employees who lawfully submit complaints under these procedures.

Any employee may make a complaint or disclosure by following the process set forth in the Employee Complaint Policy located at the end of the handbook as an appendix.

Discrimination Notices

For further information from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) on notices of non-discrimination, visit <https://wdcrocolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm> for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481

Harassment / Discrimination Complaint Procedure

GCA is committed to creating a safe, healthy learning environment for all students that enhances personal safety and encourages respect, dignity, and equality among students. GCA complies with all applicable laws, including but not limited to the following:

Non-Discrimination

(Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title II, Sec 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Age Discrimination Act of 1975, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001)

GCA is committed to providing a working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

In accordance with federal and state laws and local policy, GCA prohibits the acts of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and exclusion towards any individual on the basis of the individual's actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race or ethnicity, ethnic group identification, ancestry, nationality, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disability, age, alienage, veteran status, parental status, family status, or marital status in admission or access to its programs, facilities, services, activities, employment opportunities, or any aspect of operations. GCA provides equal access and opportunity to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated (outside) youth or community groups to meet on school premises or in school facilities, and prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and exclusion towards any individual or group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America or other designated (outside) youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society.

The persons listed below have been designated to coordinate GCA's compliance with its non-discrimination policies:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Title IX also prohibits gender-based harassment, which may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping, even if those acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature.
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits discrimination on the basis of age.
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.

GCA has designated the following individual to coordinate GCA's compliance with Title VI, Age Discrimination Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Nikki Perrilloux, Director of Human Resources
Office: 404-334-4790 Fax: 404-684-8816

Georgia Cyber Academy also complies with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA").

GCA has designated the following individual to coordinate GCA's compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"):

J. Brock Tarno, Director of Special Education
Office: 404-334-4790 Fax: 404-684-8816

Under the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, no public elementary school or state or local education agency that provides an opportunity for one or more outside youth or community groups to meet on school premises or in school facilities before or after school hours shall deny equal access or a fair opportunity to meet to, or discriminate against, any group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America, or any other youth group listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society.

The following individual has been designated to coordinate GCA's compliance with Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act:

Michael Kooi, Superintendent
Office: 404-334-4790 Fax: 404-684-8816

Members of the GCA community with questions or concerns about GCA's procedures for complying with these laws should reach out to the appropriate compliance coordinator. The compliance coordinator will provide inquiring individuals with information and guidance on GCA's policies and procedures and appropriate steps for following the same.

Reporting Discrimination

Any person who believes that he or she has been the victim of discrimination should report the alleged discrimination by following the procedures set forth in the attached Employee Complaint Procedure, Employee Sexual Harassment Policy, or Family Complaint Procedure, as appropriate.

Once a complaint has been made, designated personnel will begin an investigation, track progress, and determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes a violation of Title VI, Title IX, Title II, Section 504, the Age Discrimination Act, or the Boy Scouts Equal Access Act, and take appropriate action.

PARENT and STUDENT COMPLAINTS should be directed to: refer to the Family Complaint Policy located on the GCA website and in the GCA Family and Student Handbook Office: 404-3344790 Fax: 404-684-8816

DESCRIPTION OF CONDUCT THAT VIOLATES THESE LAWS

Harassment may take many forms, including the following conduct when based on the protected characteristics described above:

Verbal

Epithets; derogatory comments, slurs, or name-calling; inappropriate jokes, emails or any other form of written communication, comments, noises, or remarks; repeated requests for dates, threats, propositions, unwelcome and unwanted correspondence, phone calls, and gifts; or other unwelcome attention.

Physical

Assault; impeding or blocking movement; physical interference with normal work or movement; unwanted and unwarranted physical contact, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against, or poking another worksite employee's body.

Visual

Abusive or patently offensive images (whether in photographs, posters, cartoons, drawings, paintings, or other forms of imagery); displaying abusive or patently offensive images, writings, or objects; ogling, staring at or directing attention to a worksite employee's anatomy; leering; sexually oriented or suggestive gestures.

Cyberstalking

Proscribed harassment using electronic communication, such as e-mail or instant messaging (IM), or messages posted to a website, blog, or discussion group.

Proscribed harassment can occur in one-on-one interactions or in group settings and can involve a co-worker, manager, vendor, customer, visitor, or agent of the School. It is impossible to specify every action or all words that could be interpreted as harassment. The examples listed above are not meant to be a complete list of objectionable behavior.

Harassment

Employees are expected to treat co-workers with respect and to refrain from any conduct which may be construed as harassment. If you experience or observe any illegal harassment by employees, vendors, customers, or other third parties based on religion, age, sex, race, or any other factor, or if you believe that you have been treated in an unlawful, discriminatory manner, it is your duty to immediately report the incident per the procedures in the GCA employee complaint policy. Your complaint will be kept confidential to the extent possible, as determined by GCA.

Sexual Harassment and/or Discrimination

Pursuant to GCA's Employee Sexual Harassment Policy attached hereto as an Appendix, any individual may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, at any time, including during non-business hours, by mail, phone, or email. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to Human Resources, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, or both. Such reports/complaints as defined by the GCA Employee Sexual Harassment Policy shall be handled in accordance with the processes and procedures set forth in such policy. See attached.

The following individual has been designated as Title IX coordinator to investigate alleged violations of the Sex Discrimination and/or Harassment:

Nikki Perrilloux, Director of Human Resources
Office: 404-334-4790 Fax: 404-684-8816

All employees are expected to cooperate in investigations of complaints by providing truthful information in response to any inquiry. GCA prohibits any form of retaliation against any employee for filing a truthful complaint under this policy or for assisting in a complaint investigation. Retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. However, if after investigating any complaint GCA should determine that the complaint was untruthful or that an employee has provided false information regarding the complaint, disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be taken against such individual for filing an untruthful complaint or for giving false information. However, this is not meant to discourage employees from making truthful reports. In some situations, it may not be possible to determine whether harassment or discrimination has occurred.

GCA will investigate complaints promptly, impartially, thoroughly and, to the extent possible, confidentially as per the appropriate above-referenced policies. The manner and extent of investigation is at the discretion of GCA management, as deemed necessary. In all cases, the employee making the complaint will be advised when an investigation has been concluded.

Whistleblower Protection and Reporting Fraud

GCA expects all GCA employees as well as administrators to be honest and ethical in their conduct, and to comply with applicable State and Federal law, Board policies, administrative procedures, and processes. GCA encourages staff to report possible violations of these expectations to their immediate supervisors.

It is the responsibility of an employee who is aware of conduct on the part of any Board member or GCA employee or administrator that possibly violates Federal or State law, or Board policy, to call this conduct to the attention of his/her immediate supervisor. If the employee's immediate supervisor is not responsive or is the employee whose behavior is in question, the employee may report to the Superintendent. If the reported conduct relates to the Superintendent or an administrator or the Superintendent is not responsive, the report may be filed directly with the Board Chair.

After such a report is made, the immediate supervisor will ask that the employee's report be put in writing. Any employee making such a report shall be protected from discipline, retaliation, or reprisal for making such a report if the employee made a reasonable and good faith effort to determine the accuracy of any information reported. Employees are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, for purposely, knowingly, or recklessly making a false report under this policy. Conversely, employees are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, if they are aware of a violation of Federal, State, or local law that the Board has the authority to correct, but they do not make a report confirmed in writing to their immediate supervisor or consistent with this policy.

In the case of reporting suspected fraud or fraudulent activity, an employee may file a report using the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) system for reporting of fraud. This reporting mechanism may be used either in addition to or instead of filing a written report with the employee's supervisor or as otherwise permitted under this policy.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) maintains a system for the reporting of fraud, including misuse of public money by any official or office. The system allows all Georgia citizens, including public employees, the opportunity to make anonymous complaints through a toll-free number, the OIG's website, or through the United States mail.

U.S. Office of the State Inspector
2 Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, S.W
1102 West Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334
CALL 866.435.7644
Website: <https://oig.georgia.gov>

HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SAFETY

Workplace Injuries or Illnesses

Pursuant to Georgia law, Georgia Cyber Academy provides certain benefits to employees for work-related injuries sustained in the course of and arising out of employment as well as illnesses contracted in the course of the employment. It also provides benefits to an employee's dependents in those cases of death suffered in the course of employment and arising out of employment. As a result, if any employee sustains a workplace injury or contracts an occupational disease, they may be eligible to receive compensation and benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act.

An employee who sustains a work-related injury must report the injury and its circumstances to their supervisor and Human Resources immediately following the occurrence of the injury. An incident report should be completed as soon as possible on the day of the injury to Human Resources, who will process it with the benefits departments. An accident investigation will be conducted in a timely manner. The failure of an employee to timely report a work-related injury may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. No matter how insignificant an injury may seem at the time of occurrence, you must notify your immediate supervisor and Human Resources immediately.

All employees must provide emergency contact information for persons to be contacted in the event of a personal emergency. Emergency contact information is confidential and will not be made available to nonessential staff.

All employees are required to supply emergency contact information — it is each employee's personal decision as to whom he or she chooses to have as the emergency contact. To keep information current should an emergency arise, employees are asked to notify Human Resources when changes occur.

Emergency Contact information is to be entered directly into GCA's HR, payroll and benefits portal, ADP where Human Resources has access to these details should it become necessary.

It is the policy of GCA to provide its employees a safe workplace and to follow procedures aimed at safeguarding all employees. Safety is everyone's responsibility. Every supervisor is always expected to devote the time and effort necessary to ensure the safety of their employees.

Management and Human Resources must be made aware immediately of all workplace injuries or potential hazardous situations in order for GCA to evaluate the situation and implement any necessary corrective action.

Employees must learn and follow the safety practices and procedures for their jobs. This includes compliance with all safety rules and use of safety devices and personal protective equipment required. In addition, it is important to correct or report all safety, health, and fire hazards to supervisors promptly who will take action to remedy the situation. Employees must report any incident to Human Resources immediately.

The employee's failure to observe these guidelines may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Breaks, Attendance, Time-Off, and Leave
Lunch and Break Periods

Typically, employees take a 30-minute lunch break.

This lunch break is unpaid for non-exempt employees. Exempt employees may be granted the equivalent of at least sixty (60) minutes through a combination of no less than a contiguous thirty (30) minutes lunch period and other periodic breaks given throughout the day.

Lunch breaks are generally taken between the hours of 11am and 2pm. The timing of your lunch break is based on work requirements in each department. Staggered lunch breaks may be necessary to ensure the continuity of operations and services.

Full-time non-exempt employees will also be provided two paid rest periods of 15 minutes each day. Scheduling of rest periods is dependent on the needs of each department.

Breaks are intended to provide employees an opportunity away from work. Non-exempt employees are not permitted to perform any work during breaks.

Non-exempt employees must record the starting and stopping times of lunch breaks on their time sheet. Non-exempt employees must also record the starting and stopping times of rest periods exceeding 20 minutes. Rest periods of less than 20 minutes are counted as working time and employees will be paid for those periods.

Supervisors and managers are prohibited from requiring or encouraging nonexempt employees to perform work during unpaid breaks. Employees should immediately report to Human Resources any supervisor or manager who encourages or requires nonexempt employees to perform work during unpaid breaks.

Any non-exempt employee who performs work during their lunch break or rest break exceeding 20 minutes must correct their time entries to record the time spent working during their break.

Nonexempt employees who do not take lunch or rest breaks as scheduled, take unauthorized lunch or rest breaks, or take longer lunch or rest breaks than permitted, may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Time Sheets and Time Off Reporting

All non-exempt and hourly employees must record their time worked daily, following their department standard timesheet and submittal process.

Employees should record on a daily basis all actual time worked, including the starting and stopping times of each workday, and all time away from work, including the starting and stopping times of unpaid meal periods. Your supervisor will review your time entries and ask you to verify them at the end of each pay period. Employees must report corrections to their time entries as soon as possible to his or her supervisor.

Falsifying time entries, including by working “off the clock,” is strictly prohibited. If you falsify your time entries or work off the clock, you will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. You should immediately report to Human Resources any supervisor or manager who falsifies your time entries or encourages or requires you to falsify your time entries or work off the clock.

Both exempt and nonexempt employees must submit a request for time off through the Paylocity online platform. The Human Resources & Payroll/Benefits Office is responsible for ensuring that all employees comply with the GCA timekeeping policy. Managers have the discretion to approve or decline requests based on their specific business needs.

In-person Attendance as required

Although GCA is a virtual school, there are still in-person events and activities that all employees will be required to attend.

In-person attendance at professional development, training, conferences, job fairs, meetings, evaluations, school events, marketing events, and testing sites will be required several times per year. This requirement is a part of all GCA faculty and staff contracts and job descriptions.

If an environmental situation such as an epidemic or pandemic is in progress and known at the time the employee signs their contract, then the employee is required to fulfill their contract in full including attendance at any in-person school activity or event as required if it is allowed by law and GCA adheres to CDC and DPH safety guidelines and protocols.

Failure to attend required in-person events as directed will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, unless GCA accepted that the employee would not be able to attend events and activities in-person at the time the employee was contracted, and the acceptance is clearly noted in the signed contract.

Absenteeism and Tardiness

Regular attendance is essential for the success of GCA. Unexcused absences, excessive excused absences with no substantiating documentation, and/or habitual tardiness are discourteous to fellow employees and may result in corrective action up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Absences that are not pre-approved are considered unexcused, unless for illness or a medical emergency. Medical/dental documentation for two (2) or more consecutive days of absence due to illness may be requested. Sick days taken prior to or immediately following a weekend may require medical documentation. Sick days taken prior to or immediately following a holiday or school break will require medical documentation. While our guideline is one (1) day of absence before a note from a medical professional is required, a manager may request a note for a single day if a pattern of absence is noticed. In addition, two (2) consecutive workdays of absence, without notifying GCA, is job abandonment and will be considered a resignation.

Employees should notify their supervisor as soon as possible on the first day of their absence (if not before). Promptness in reporting an absence can help prevent inconvenience to fellow employees and disruption to student services and instruction. Accordingly, in such situations, employees must notify their supervisors as soon as possible, but in no event later than their start time. An employee should make every effort to speak to a supervisor, manager, or senior-level manager to report the absence or tardiness. In the event this is not possible, a voicemail or email may be enough. Note: Text messages are not a sufficient way to report an absence from work. If responsible for student instruction, then employee needs to continue to try and reach a supervisor or school leadership to let them know that you will not be available to cover their classes and/or tests. When the employee returns to work, a Request for Time Off form must be submitted to the supervisor.

Absence Without Notice

If you do not report for work for more than one (1) day and GCA does not receive proper notification of your status, it will be assumed that you have resigned, and you will be removed from the payroll. For absences without proper notification of status, medical documentation will be required for continued employment to be considered.

If you become ill while at work or must leave the office for some other reason before the end of the workday, you must inform your supervisor immediately of the situation prior to leaving, unless you are experiencing a medical emergency. Merely notifying your supervisor does not necessarily mean that your absence will be excused.

Time off Policy

At Georgia Cyber Academy, we work hard, care deeply for our students, and recognize the need for employees to take time off to relax and recharge. As a result, the GCA time off policies are designated to reward our effort

by providing time away from work. Employees are encouraged to plan time off well in advance, so scheduling conflicts can be avoided, and supervisors can balance staffing and business needs.

Personal Time Off (PTO) and Sick Time Off (STO) may be taken ninety (90) days after your first day of employment. Personal and Sick time is subject to an adjustment on a pro rata basis from date of hire.

PTO provides you with the flexibility to use your time off to meet your personal needs, while recognizing your individual responsibility to manage your paid time off.

Up to three (3) PTO days may be granted and up to seven (7) STO days may be accrued in a twelve (12) month contractual period. The total amount of days granted may be less based on the employee's date of hire.

- PTO does not carry over from one school year to another.
- STO may be carried over from one school year to another.
- Any unused PTO and STO is not paid out should you no longer be employed.
- STO should only be used in cases of illness or medical/dental services and procedures.
- Employees must use PTO or STO, as is most applicable, when taking time off from work for any reason.
- PTO and STO must be taken in increments of two (2), four (4) or eight (8) hours.

All GCA employees are provided time off during fall break, winter break, and spring break. Summer break periods, instead of vacation weeks, may also apply for ten (10) and eleven (11) month employees. The dates of these breaks, along with school holidays, will be determined and added to the school calendar each year. The Superintendent reserves the right to amend this schedule if operational business needs dictate.

Vacation time will be stated in each applicable twelve (12) month employee's contract and will denote the amount and times that it may be taken. GCA employees do not accrue vacation time off nor does time off carry over from one school year to another. If in an employee is hired after July 1st, the amount of vacation time granted will be prorated. Also, if the periods in which vacation time can be taken have elapsed for the position hired, then no time may be granted. Any unused vacation time off is not paid out should you no longer be employed.

Employees are expected to schedule trips and other vacations during fall break, winter break, spring break, summer break, holidays, and approved vacation days. Requests for unpaid time off must be pre-approved by Human Resources and the Superintendent and will only be granted in extenuating circumstances.

Time off cannot be requested during Critical Days as outlined in the Critical Days policy. Such requests must be pre-approved by Human Resources and the employee's Department Director and will only be granted in extenuating circumstances. Time off cannot be requested after you resign.

No summer break, holiday, vacation, PTO, or STO pay will be awarded for any days after an employee's last actual workday. For example, an employee's last day working is July 3rd. That person would not receive holiday pay for July 4th.

When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, then it is up to the Superintendent to schedule when it will be observed. These days are set at the discretion of the Superintendent.

When requesting time off, employees must provide advance notice of their request. They must follow their department's expectations when making such requests. Such expectations should be communicated by the leadership of each department. If no expectation is set, then employees should make their request as soon as they are aware of needing time off or at a minimum of three (3) days in advance to allow time for it to be considered and approved or denied. Management can deny the request for time off based on the operational

business needs of GCA, except for approved FMLA and other leave required by law. If multiple requests are received for the same days off within the same department and not all can be granted without impeding the operational needs of GCA, the requests will be granted on a first come first serve basis to the extent that will not impede the operational business needs of the department and/or school.

Sick time off requests under this policy may be used in connection with the diagnosis, care, or treatment of an existing health condition for, or the preventive care of, an employee or an employee's immediate family member. An "immediate family member" for purposes of this policy includes spouses, registered domestic partner or civil union, children (if a dependent or under the age of 21), and parents (including stepparents and parents-in-laws). Substantiating documentation may be required to award STO pay.

Employees must notify their immediate supervisor as soon as they know they will not be able to report to work due to illness unless their illness prevents them from doing so. (Text messages are not an appropriate way to inform GCA Leadership that you are taking a sick day). If two (2) or more consecutive sick days are taken, you may be required to provide a note from a medical professional. The note can be given directly to Human Resources. Please note that a manager has the discretion to ask for a note from a medical professional even if you have only been out one (1) day.

Additionally, you might be given (and may always request) information about a Leave of Absence/FMLA.

The accrual of Personal Time Off (PTO) is refreshed each school/contract year and is not carried over year to year and not paid out upon termination.

Sick Time Off Time Off (STO) is accrued on a monthly basis and is carried over from year to year. However, STO is not paid out upon termination and no more than twenty (20) days of STO can be used in a given school year.

School Officials have the discretion to change the number of PTO and STO days offered and the criteria governing how they are awarded under new employee agreements with or without notice to meet the needs of GCA. Existing contracts will maintain the number of PTO and STO that were in place as of the employee's hire date through the end of the employee's current contract.

Employees are encouraged to plan time off well in advance, so scheduling conflicts can be avoided, and supervisors can balance staffing and business needs. To request time off follow your department's procedures to request and gain approval of your time off. If your department does not have specific procedures, request your time off in writing (email or time off request form), and gain approval from your immediate supervisor. A supervisor can deny the request for time off based on business needs, except for approved Family Medical Leave and other leave required by law.

Critical Days Policy

We believe that all professional development, training, and state testing directly impact the success of our students at GCA. Additionally, audit and monitoring cycles are critical components of our school's accountability requirements. To demonstrate that belief, we have put in place a critical day policy.

All GCA staff will be required to attend all face-to-face professional development, training, departmental meetings as called, state testing as assigned for all state testing cycles, EOY and BOY schoolwide events, strong start, and audit/monitoring visits as required. GCA staff will not be able to request PTO during these days and sick days will require a note from a physician. Any other unexpected circumstances that may take you away from

the events listed in this policy will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by your Department Director, Human Resources, and the Superintendent and documentation may be required.

Additional days may be considered Critical Days for specific positions and departments. These will be outlined in the employee's contract.

Holidays

All full-time employees are eligible for holiday pay. Part-time employees, temporary staff, and substitute teachers are not eligible for holiday pay. Summer break will not be paid time off for part-time employees, temporary staff, or substitute teachers.

If any holiday falls on a weekend day (Saturday-or-Sunday), the holiday will be observed on another day at the sole discretion of GCA.

Employees on an unpaid leave of absence will not be eligible for paid holidays and breaks. The designated holidays and breaks observed throughout the school year will be stated in GCA Calendar depicted on the website. The applicable summer break period or vacation period is provided in each employee's employment contract.

All holidays observed by GCA are set forth in the school calendar located on the GCA website.

Voting Time-off

Georgia Cyber Academy permits employees to be absent from work to vote in local, state, or national elections. If an employee's polling place does not either open at least two (2) hours before the employee's workday begins or remains open at least two (2) hours after the employee's workday is scheduled to end, the employee may take up to two (2) hours of paid time off to vote. The time off to vote may not exceed two (2) hours. Evidence of the voter registration and voting may be required. If GCA releases employees early (3:35pm) on a voting day, then employees may not take two (2) hours of paid time off earlier in the day to vote.

Notice of the intent to take the time off to vote must be given no later than the workday immediately before the day of the election.

Jury Duty and Witness Leave

If a full-time regular employee is summoned to jury duty, the employee will receive his or her salary during the period of jury duty for up to a maximum of five (5) working days per calendar year. If the jury service extends beyond five (5) days, full-time regular employees can use their own PTO to cover the extended days otherwise they will go without pay, except as noted below. All employees are permitted to retain the allowance he or she receives from the court of such service.

A part-time regular employee will be allowed to use their own PTO (if applicable) otherwise they will be given time off without pay while serving jury duty, except as noted below.

To qualify for jury or witness duty leave, an employee must submit to his/her supervisor a copy of the summons, subpoena or notice as soon as it is received. This documentation then needs to be provided to both Human Resources and Payroll. Employees must notify their supervisor as soon as it is known that jury duty will be extended. A request for time off showing Jury Duty or Witness Leave must be submitted immediately for processing.

Religious Leave

An employee may use accumulated personal time off for personal reasons, including religious reasons.

If the employee desires to take leave in excess of the days provided under the PTO policy, the employee may request a religious accommodation from Human Resources.

Bereavement Leave

If a death occurs in the immediate family of a full-time or part-time regular employee, the employee may be compensated for time lost from his/her regular work schedule in accordance with the following guidelines. An immediate family member for purposes of this policy is a spouse, domestic partner and partner in a civil union, child, parent, sibling or comparable step relation, a grandparent, a grandchild, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law or daughter-in-law or anyone living permanently in an employee's household.

A full-time employee may request a leave of absence with pay for a maximum of five (5) consecutive days. A part-time employee may request a leave of absence with pay for a maximum of three (3) consecutive days. Additional unpaid leave may be granted with Human Resources and Superintendent approval.

If the death of a relative occurs that is not a member of a full-time or part-time regular employee's immediate family, the employee may be compensated for time lost from his/her regular work schedule in accordance with the following guidelines.

- A full-time employee may request a leave of absence with pay for a maximum of two (2) consecutive days.
- A part-time employee may request a leave of absence with pay for a maximum of one (1) day.

Additional unpaid leave may be granted with Human Resources and Superintendent approval. Time given for bereavement cannot be taken at any other time but during the period of immediate loss. These days are to be taken consecutively within a reasonable time of the day of the death or day of the funeral and may not be split or postponed.

An employee is allowed up to ten (10) days maximum per calendar year for this benefit. An employee may, with his or her supervisor's approval, use any available PTO for additional time off as necessary.

Proof of death and relationship to the deceased may be required.

Upon returning to work, the employee must record his/her absence as a Bereavement Leave on his/her request for time off.

Parental Leave

To help employees balance their work and family priorities, Georgia Cyber Academy offers a paid parental leave to employees, after the birth of a child or placement in the home for adoption. All full time employees of GCA are eligible. The parental leave provisions are as follows:

- Employees may take up to ten (10) paid days off, after the birth of a child or placement in the home for adoption. This benefit is available once within a "rolling" 12-month period.
- Parental leave must be taken in consecutive days (and cannot be used intermittently), and it must be taken within 3 months after the birth of the child or placement in the home for adoption.
- It is the employee's responsibility to inform HR/Benefits as to when they will use their parental leave.
- Employees who voluntarily terminate employment with GCA after their short-term disability benefits end are not eligible to use parental leave as part of their notice of resignation (2 week notice).

Parental leave is not a vested benefit, and if unused, will not be paid out in cash or credited to an employee's Paid Time Off (PTO) balance or paid out upon termination. An employee may be required to furnish certification of the birth of the child or placement in the home for adoption.

Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

Employees shall be entitled to use available sick days (if applicable), vacation days, and/or Leave Without Pay (LWOP) for family and medical leave purposes in order to comply with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, as amended.

Under FMLA, employees who have been employed for at least 12 months (continuous or non-continuous), and have worked 1,250 hours of service during the previous 12-month period preceding the start of the leave, are eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave during each rolling 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- The birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care
- To bond with a child (leave must be taken within one year of the child's birth or placement)
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a qualifying serious health condition
- For a qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform his/her job
- For qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military member who is the employee's spouse, child, or parent.

"Spouse" means a husband or wife as defined or recognized under State law for purposes of marriage. Parent means a biological parent or individual who stands or stood in "loco parentis" to an employee when the employee was a child. This term does not include parents "in-law". "Child" means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in "loco parentis" who is either under age 18, or age 18 or older and "incapable of self-care because of mental or physical disability."

An eligible employee who is a covered servicemember's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may also take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the servicemember with a serious injury or illness. An employee does not need to use leave in one block. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, employees may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule.

Benefits and Protections

During FMLA leave, GCA must maintain the employee's health coverage under any group health plan on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

An employer may not interfere with an individual's FMLA rights or retaliate against someone for using or trying to use FMLA leave, opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA, or being involved in any proceeding under or related to the FMLA.

Definition of Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three (3) consecutive calendar days combined with at least two (2) visits to a health care provider or one (1) visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment. Examples of a serious health condition include, but are not limited to: heart attacks, heart conditions requiring heart bypass or valve operations, most cancers, back conditions requiring extensive therapy or surgical procedures, strokes, severe respiratory conditions, spinal injuries, appendicitis, pneumonia, emphysema, severe arthritis, severe nervous

disorders, injuries caused by serious accidents on or off the job, ongoing pregnancy, severe morning sickness, the need for prenatal care, childbirth, and recovery from childbirth.

Employee Responsibilities

If the need for family or medical leave is foreseeable, the employee must provide their Principal or manager with at least 30 days' notice. When 30 days' notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and must comply with GCA's call-in procedures. Georgia Cyber Academy may require medical certification on a form provided by Human Resources if leave is sought to care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition, or due to illness or injury of the employee.

If medically necessary, intermittent or reduced leave may be available under certain circumstances, provided an attempt to schedule leave is made so as to not disrupt operations.

An employee who wishes to maintain group coverage during the leave must continue to pay his/her portion of the premium for coverage, if applicable, on the same basis as if the employee had been continuously working during the leave. If the employee does not return to work following FMLA leave for a reason other than: 1) the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition which would entitle him/her to FMLA leave, or 2) other circumstances beyond the employee's control, he/she may be required to reimburse GCA for its share of health insurance premiums paid on his/her behalf during the FMLA leave.

Any employee returning from a medical leave of absence must obtain and present a current medical certification that the employee is able to resume work without restrictions. Such certification must be provided prior to returning to work. If the employee cannot return after the 12 weeks of leave, there is no obligation to return the employee to any position within GCA.

Employer Responsibilities

Once GCA becomes aware that an employee's need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, GCA will direct the employee to contact Unum, our third party administrator of FMLA benefits. Unum will notify the employee if he/she is eligible for FMLA leave and, if eligible, will provide a notice of rights and responsibilities under FMLA. If the employee is not eligible, Unum will provide the reason for ineligibility.

Enforcement

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave

An employee taking FMLA leave will be required to use all available PTO, including sick time, vacation time, and personal days prior to being placed on leave without pay (LWOP). The remainder of the FMLA leave will be unpaid. Employees may also use short-term disability benefits, if qualified.

Leave of Absence (Non-FMLA)

An employee who is ineligible for FMLA leave may be eligible for a Non-FMLA Leave of Absence (LOA) when their own serious health conditions render them unable to perform the functions of their position, as certified by a physician. Short Term Disability (STD), Long Term Disability (LTD), and Extended Leave are available six (6) months after the first date of employment for new hires provided proper documentation is presented and they are approved.

The employee will only be approved for the LOA for the length of time his/her physician certifies them to remain off work and is initially approved through GCA's short-term disability insurance provider, up to a maximum of six (6) weeks.

Requests for a LOA should be made through the Benefits department. Employees must provide thirty (30) days' advance notice of the need to take leave when the need is foreseeable. When thirty (30) days' notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with GCA's normal call-in procedures. Employees must follow the STD claim process to determine if they qualify for a LOA. Initial denial of the STD claim will result in a denial of the LOA.

During a LOA, the employee will not earn employment benefits, such as Holiday Pay benefits. However, the employee will not lose any employment benefits earned and accrued up to the date the leave begins.

The employee is responsible for paying their group health insurance contributions during the leave. The employee will be required to use accrued personal and/or sick time during the LOA for time not covered by the STD benefit.

Upon expiration of the employee's LOA, GCA will attempt to reinstate the employee to his or her former position or an equivalent position. However, conditions may have changed during the employee's absence or it may have become necessary to fill or eliminate the employee's position. Accordingly, reinstatement to employment after a non-FMLA LOA cannot be guaranteed. Rather, it is dependent on the continued availability of a position and on GCA's business needs.

An employee who fails to return to an available position on the first scheduled workday after the Non-FMLA LOA has expired will be deemed to have resigned from employment with GCA.

Unpaid Personal Leave

In an effort to recognize the need of employees who require time off in addition to other types of leave, Georgia Cyber Academy may consider an unpaid personal leave of absence without pay for up to a maximum of thirty (30) days.

All regular employees employed by GCA for a minimum of ninety (90) days are eligible to apply for an unpaid personal leave of absence. Job performance, absenteeism, and departmental requirements all will be taken into consideration before a request is approved. Approvals of the immediate supervisor, department director, human resources, and the Superintendent are required. Requests for unpaid personal leave may be denied or granted by the School for any reason or no reason and are within the sole discretion of GCA. Georgia Cyber Academy reserves the right to terminate employment for any reason or no reason during the leave of absence.

An eligible employee should submit a request in writing to his or her immediate supervisor. The requesting employee will be asked to acknowledge in writing his or her understanding that all requests for personal leaves are not granted.

An employee is required to return from the unpaid personal leave on the originally scheduled return date. If the employee is unable to return, he or she must request an extension of the leave in writing to their supervisor, the department Director, Human Resources, and the Superintendent. If Georgia Cyber Academy declines to extend the leave, the employee must then return to work on the originally scheduled return date or be considered to have voluntarily resigned from his or her employment. Extensions of leave will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Military Leave of Absence

Military Leave will be granted to all regular full-time, part-time, and probationary employees in compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and applicable state laws.. Independent contractors and temporary employees who were only employed for a brief, non-recurrent (one-time only) period before the start of military service are not eligible for leave under this policy.

For purposes of this policy, eligible military service means certain types of service (listed below) in the following branches of the US military:

- Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard), including the Reserves.
- National Guard, including the Army National Guard and Air National Guard, when the employee is engaged under federal authority in active duty for training, inactive duty training, or fulltime National Guard duty.
- Commissioned corps of the Public Health Service.
- Any other category of persons designated by the President in time of war or national emergency.

Eligible employees may take leave under this policy for the following types of military service:

- Active duty.
- Active duty for training.
- Initial active duty for training.
- Inactive duty training.
- Full-time National Guard duty.
- Submitting to an examination to determine your fitness for any of these services.
- Funeral honors duty performed by National Guard or Reserve members.
- Duty performed by intermittent disaster response personnel for the Public Health Service and approved training to prepare for this service.
- Service as an intermittent disaster response appointee of the National Disaster Medical System when employees are:
 - Activated under federal authority; or
 - Attending authorized training in support of a federal mission.

Advance notice is required to maintain such a leave status. When possible, employees should give at least 30 days' notice of the request for leave. If 30 days' notice is not possible because of military necessity or for other reasons, the employee should give as much advance notice to GCA as possible. Employees must contact Human Resources to file for a Military Leave of Absence. In addition to contacting Human Resources, contact your immediate supervisor to discuss steps for business planning purposes. Employees will be required to provide a copy of the military orders.

Employees who take a military leave of absence will be granted two (2) weeks of paid leave per year. If further leave is required, the employee will be paid the difference between their military pay and school pay for up to six (6) months, granted the military pay is the lesser of the two, to a maximum of \$10,000 per year. Information regarding the employee's military salary must be provided to Human Resources.

If any additional time is needed for military service after the six (6) months of differential pay is exhausted, he or she may use vacation or personal time for military services. The use of an employee's leave balances would be a supplement to the military pay an employee is receiving during service. If the military pay exceeds an employee's GCA salary, the leave will be unpaid. Should an employee be required to take an extended leave without pay to

fulfill his or her military duty, eligibility for reinstatement after military duty or training is completed is determined in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws.

Medical coverage will terminate on the last day of the month for which services to GCA were performed. This will be considered a “qualifying event” under COBRA. The employee and their eligible dependents will be able to continue benefits under COBRA in accordance with USERRA regulations or choose to accept coverage under the military plans in effect at the time.

Subject to terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans for which the employee is otherwise eligible, health insurance benefits will be provided by GCA if currently elected for the full term of the military leave of absence. Vacation, sick leave, and Non-FMLA Medical Leave will continue to accrue during a military leave to the same extent they accrue for employees who are not on military leave.

COMPENSATION AND EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

Paydays

Employees are paid semi-monthly, on or about the 15 and the last day of each month. Normal pay periods are Sunday – Saturday. Pay statements are made available on the established pay date and can be viewed in ADP. A payroll calendar is made available to all hourly employees and can be obtained from Human Resources.

Should a pay day fall on a bank holiday or on the weekend, paychecks are typically made available on the prior business day. These dates are subject to change with notice at the discretion of the HOS and/or Executive Director.

Direct Deposit

All Employees must set up direct deposit directly in the ADP system. This must be completed within the first three (3) days of employment or within three (3) days of a change in an employee’s financial institution. Failure to set up direct deposit will delay an employee’s paycheck and any expense reimbursement as hardcopy checks are delivered via United States Postal Services (USPS) and can take several days for delivery. If direct deposit is not set up after the first paycheck is issued, the employee will automatically receive a pay card for salaries earned during that pay period.

Exempt/Salaried Employees Reduction of Salary

Exempt employees are paid on a salary basis and, in general, must be paid their full salary for any week in which they perform work. Their salary may be reduced in the following circumstances:

- Employees who are absent from work for at least a half day for personal reasons other than sickness or disability will not be paid for a full day unless they have PTO available to them under GCA’s paid time off policies. A vacation day may not be used unless it has been pre- approved by a manager.
- Employees who are absent from work for jury duty or attendance as a witness may have their salary reduced by the amount of payment, they receive in the form of jury fees or witness fees. Their salary will not be reduced by the number of hours or days they are absent unless they perform no work during the given week.
- Employees may be suspended without pay for other types of workplace misconduct, but only in full-day increments. This refers to suspensions imposed pursuant to a written policy applicable to all employees regarding serious misconduct including, but not limited to, workplace harassment, violence, drug and alcohol violations, legal violations, etc. The possibility of such unpaid suspensions is hereby incorporated into all such policies.
- Employees who work less than forty (40) hours during their first and/or last week of employment will be paid a proportionate part of their full salary for the time worked.

- Employees who take leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act will not be paid for that time unless they have available paid time off under the GCA paid time off policies. Their salary will be reduced by the hours missed, even if it is for less than a full day.

The policy is subject to applicable laws. GCA will follow the state law regarding reduction of exempt/salaried employees' salaries if the state law is more favorable to employees.

Exempt/salaried employees will be reimbursed in full to the extent required by law for any isolated, inadvertent, or improper deductions as defined by law. Concerns about any salary pay deduction from exempt/salaried employees should be promptly directed to Human Resources for a resolution.

Overtime for Non-Exempt Employees

In accordance with the Federal Labor Standards Act (FLSA), non-exempt employees are eligible to receive overtime pay at a rate of one and one-half times their regular pay for time worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek. Before overtime is worked, the employee must have written approval from his or her supervisor.

Salary Supplements (Stipends)

Salary supplements are given to employees who are hired to perform extracurricular or extra duties.

Salary supplements are recommended by the Department Directors to the Superintendent and Human Resources Department. The Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer at their sole discretion grant or deny stipend requests.

Teacher and Staff Bonus Payments

Pursuant to the employment contract, GCA may provide a discretionary retention and/or performance bonus to any or all GCA staff who GCA deems eligible. Bonuses may be prorated based on the date of hire, based on individual completion of performance goals as well as School goals.

Only employees who return to GCA after employment the previous school year will be eligible for a discretionary retention bonus. Should your start date with GCA be January 1st or later you will be ineligible for payment under the bonus plan in that academic year. Payment of any amounts under the bonus plan will only be made if you are a current GCA employee on the scheduled payroll date. Employee specifically agrees that employee's failure to remain as an employee for the entire school year during which a bonus is paid out may result in GCA having the authority to recoup any or all of such bonus payment, including but not limited to, recouping such funds from any remaining paychecks owed to employee.

This policy is not a guarantee that a discretionary bonus will be issued to employees, or if so, of any particular amount.

Garnishments and Levies

Georgia Cyber Academy expects employees to avoid garnishments and levies. In all events, GCA will comply with applicable law as to garnishments and levies.

Social Security/Medicare

Eligible part-time employees may participate in the Social Security Program and, when required under the provisions of federal law, may pay contributions to FICA when employed by GCA. All employees are required by federal law to pay Medicare tax. The Medicare employer contributions must be charged against the Alternative Plan to Social Security.

GCA Reimbursable Expenses Policy

This is a high-level view of the Reimbursable Expense Policy. All eligible employees must adhere to GCA's Business Travel and Other Expense Reporting Guidelines for deeper knowledge and understanding of all eligible and non-eligible reimbursements.

The provisions of this section shall not be applied to executive level staff as their travel and other reimbursements will be negotiated with the Board of Directors.

Expense Guidelines General Overview

The purpose of these School Business Travel and Other Expense Reimbursement Guidelines is to provide employees with specific guidelines covering travel and other school business expenses as well as the documentation required to substantiate requests for reimbursement of those expenses.

Because it is not possible to anticipate all the situations that individual travelers may encounter in conducting school business, these guidelines are designed to allow for some flexibility in addressing unique circumstances which may require occasional exceptions. As a general guideline, it is expected that travelers will interpret these guidelines in a manner that keeps expenses to a minimum and fairly assigns the costs of school business related activities to GCA. Thus, moderation and discretion should guide employee decisions to incur expenses on GCA's behalf. Accordingly, the primary responsibility for adherence to these guidelines rests with the Superintendent, Finance Department, and School Officials who are authorizing travel and approving expense reimbursements. Any expenses not stated in this document are considered "outside of the guidelines" and require prior written approval from the Business Manager. Any employee perceived to be taking advantage of the system will be subject to audits, stricter guidelines, and meetings with their department's Director, Human Resources, and the Superintendent.

General Guidelines

Expenses should be submitted no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the expense has been incurred and any expense submitted after forty-five (45) calendar days of the expense date, will be rejected! Expense reports sent back for modification have sixty (60) days from the original date of submission to be corrected or they will be rejected.

All expenses for a school/fiscal year (7/1/xx- 6/30/xx) need to be submitted prior to the end of school/fiscal year or they will be rejected. Expenses for staff who are leaving GCA (resignations and terminations) must be submitted prior to the employee's final day or they will not be paid. GCA will only reimburse expenses incurred in connection with school business that are appropriately documented by the employee.

The basic guidelines governing travel expenses is that an individual should neither gain nor lose funds in the course of conducting school business. GCA will not reimburse travelers for expenses which are inherently personal in nature such as childcare, clothing, personal recreation, entertainment, etc. Reimbursable expenses must have a school business purpose. GCA will not reimburse staff for any cost associated with state required certifications, including background checks.

Assuming a reasonable level of comfort and convenience for the employee, every effort should be made to keep School expenses to a minimum. School guidelines will govern how authorization for travel is granted and School may elect to impose additional controls over travel expenditures beyond those required by these guidelines. Reimbursement will be based on actual and reasonable expenses incurred for transportation, meals, lodging, and necessary School business expenses.

A Purchase Request must be completed for all Entertainment expense requests for approval by the Superintendent and School officials who have the authority to approve such expenditures prior to incurring the expense. GCA will not provide travel advances, nor make reimbursements for the travel expenses of family members who accompany employees on School business.

For additional expense reimbursement information & procedures, please see the Georgia Cyber Academy Travel and Expense Reporting Guidelines on the GCA website under the Faculty Tab or you may contact Brenda Messer at bmersser@geogriacyber.org.

Overpayment of Wages Policy

Employees, supervisors, directors, departments, and the payroll office each have a responsibility to prevent and report any overpayment or underpayment immediately, regardless of who made the error.

The Payroll Office is responsible for making timely and accurate salary payments to employees subject to information provided by GCA departments and employees. On occasion, due to errors in processing, timeliness of submission, and reporting, an employee may be paid more or less than is owed.

The employee is responsible for reviewing the employee's pay statements after each pay period to ensure there are no discrepancies in pay. When an employee becomes aware of an overpayment or underpayment, the employee is responsible for reporting it directly to the Payroll Office and to the employee's department administrator. A department administrator who becomes aware of an overpayment or underpayment must report it to the Payroll Office as soon as the error is discovered.

Payroll Deductions

Payroll deductions are automatically made for TRS, taxes, garnishments, and levies.

Employees that elect GCA insurance benefits, including but not limited to medical, dental, and vision insurances, will have the cost for those chosen automatically deducted.

Employees that elect to enroll in additional retirement plans, such as the GCA 403B or 457 plans, will have those amounts automatically deducted from their paychecks.

Fair Labor Standards Act

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a federal labor law governing overtime, minimum wage, child labor, and equal pay. It requires employers to keep records of all hours worked by non-exempt employees.

An individual who is not exempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA and is therefore entitled to overtime pay for all hours worked beyond forty (40) hours in a workweek (as well as any state overtime provisions). Non-exempt employees may be paid on a salary, hourly, or other basis.

Full-Time Employees

Full-time employees are those who are regularly scheduled to work at least forty (40) hours per week that are not hired on a temporary basis.

Part-Time Employees

Part-time employment typically consists of a regular schedule of less than thirty-two (32) hours per week. Employees that are regularly scheduled and budgeted to work thirty-two (32) or more hours per week are eligible for most benefit programs, subject to any specific requirements described under each benefit program.

Retired educators may work a cumulative total of half-time hours over the course of a twelve (12) month period. This is still considered part-time, but retired educators may work more than thirty-two (32) hours per week, so long as their cumulative total for the year divided by the number of days worked does not equal more than twenty (20) hours per week. No benefits are paid to retired educators. If laws, rules, or regulations concerning the work time allowed by retired educators, GCA will adjust accordingly, so as not to endanger the retired educator's TRS pension.

Temporary Employees

Employees hired for an interim period of time, usually to temporarily fill in for vacations, leaves of absence, or projects of a limited duration. Temporary employees are not eligible for paid benefits, disability, leave, retirement, holiday pay, PTO pay, or STO pay, except as required by law.

The following are required:

- Clear Fingerprinting and Background Checks
- Signed Confidentiality Agreement
- Signed Handbook Acknowledgement
- Valid Driver's License
- Reliable Transportation
- Superintendent, Human Resources, and the department Director's sign off.

Temporary Employees are required to abide by all applicable laws, as well as all rules, protocols, procedures, and policies as laid out in the GCA Employee Handbook and their signed Temporary Employment Agreement. The temporary assignment may be terminated at any time without cause or notice.

High School Work Based Learning and/or Youth Apprenticeships

High school youths are occasionally offered the opportunity to work for Georgia Cyber Academy on a part-time basis. These employees are paid for their hours worked at an agreed upon rate. High School employees are not eligible for paid benefits, disability, leave, retirement, holiday pay, PTO pay, or STO pay, except as required by law.

The following are required:

- Work Permit
- Clear Fingerprinting and Background Checks
- Signed Confidentiality Agreement
- Signed Handbook Acknowledgement
- Signed work agreement
- Valid Driver's License
- Reliable Transportation
- Superintendent, Human Resources, and the department Director's sign off.

High School part-time employees are required to abide by all applicable laws, as well as all rules, protocols, procedures, and policies as laid out in the GCA Employee Handbook and their signed Part-time Employment Agreement.

The part-time high school youth assignment may be terminated at any time without cause or notice.

BENEFITS, INSURANCE, AND RETIREMENT

Benefits

GCA offers a benefits program for its regular full-time employees. However, the existence of these programs does not signify that an employee will necessarily be employed for the required time necessary to qualify for the benefits included in and administered through these programs. Eligible employees are provided a wide range of benefits. Several of the programs (such as TRS, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law.

Benefits eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification, length of time employed, and in some cases the approval of the insurance carrier, Human Resources, and/or the Superintendent. Details of many of these programs can be found elsewhere in the employee handbook.

GCA will provide newly eligible employees the Benefits Enrollment package (for enrollment in Medical, Dental, and Vision) thirty (30) days after the date of hire, or the transfer date to a benefits eligible position. If employees miss the return deadline they must wait until the next Open Enrollment period to enroll in these benefits.

This description of employee benefits only summarizes the provisions of a formal benefit Plan document and does not attempt to cover all of the details contained in the Plan document. The operation of the Plan, including events making employees eligible or ineligible for benefits, the amount of benefits to which employees (or beneficiaries) may be entitled, and actions employees (or beneficiaries) must take to request and support a claim for benefits will be governed solely by the terms of the official Plan document. To the extent that any of the information contained in this employee handbook is inconsistent with the official Plan document, the provisions set forth in the Plan document will govern in all cases.

Georgia Cyber Academy is dedicated to providing the highest quality benefit plans available. We value our wonderful team and contribute to the cost of your coverage as well as your eligible employees in order to provide comprehensive coverage at an affordable level. Georgia Cyber Academy employees will find a full listing of all benefit plans, benefit summaries, videos reviewing coverage and much more within the Benefits Enhanced portal of our ADP Payroll system.

Continuation of Benefits During Leave Process

While on leave without pay, you must take action to continue or cancel your GCA benefits. Your benefits deductions are normally taken out of your paychecks, but while you are on leave without pay, your benefits can only continue if you arrange in advance to pay your benefits via check or money order. The following explains the process of continuing or cancelling benefits while you are on leave without pay.

Benefits Continuation Election Form

Once the Payroll/Benefits Office learns that you are going out on leave, you will receive a Benefits Continuation Election Form. The purpose of this form is to inform Payroll/Benefits Office of your intent to either continue or cancel your benefits while you are on leave.

If you fail to return the Benefits Continuation Election Form to the Payroll/Benefits Office prior to the beginning of your leave, your insurance is subject to cancellation. If coverage is cancelled, you will need to re-enroll if you wish to reinstate coverage upon return from leave. It is solely your responsibility to contact the Payroll/Benefits Office upon return from leave to initiate re-enrollment.

Benefits Premium Payments

To continue your benefits, you will owe a premium for each month that you will not receive a paycheck. You may pay the premiums for the entire leave in one lump sum or monthly. To ensure continued coverage, your Request to Continue/Cancel GCA Benefits Form must be received by the Payroll/Benefits Office by the 10th of the month following the beginning of your leave without pay. For example, if your leave begins on June 15th, you will need to submit your payment by July 10th to cover your August benefits. If you elect to make payments monthly, it is your responsibility to ensure your payments reach the Payroll/Benefits Office by the 10th of each subsequent month. If a payment is not received by the 10th of the month, coverage will be subject to cancellation.

Note: Premiums are adjusted at the beginning of each calendar year. If your leave will extend beyond the end of the calendar year, you must contact the Payroll/Benefits Office in November for an update on your new benefit's premium amounts.

During FMLA, Medical, Dental, and Vision coverage will be maintained during any leave covered by FMLA (up to 12 work weeks) to the extent coverage would be maintained if you had been actively at work during the leave period. You are responsible for the payment of any employee portion of your medical plan premium. If your FMLA leave period ends and you are still out on unpaid leave, you are responsible for both the employee and the GCA contribution for your Dental and Vision coverage, and your Medical coverage unless you are receiving Short- or Long-Term Disability benefits from Unum.

During Other Approved Leaves, to maintain any of your benefits, you are responsible for paying the entire premium amount by the 10th of every month preceding the month of coverage.

If coverage is cancelled, you will need to reenroll if you wish to reinstate coverage upon return from your leave. Please note that Supplemental Disability coverage must be cancelled while you are on leave without pay (unless the leave was an approved professional development leave). It is solely your responsibility to contact the Payroll/Benefits Office upon return from leave to initiate reenrollment in any insurance that was cancelled during your leave. Your eligibility period for reenrollment ends on the last working day of the 31day period following your return from leave. If the Payroll/Benefits Office receives your enrollment forms before the end of this period, your coverage will be effective retroactive to the date you return from leave.

If coverage is cancelled, coverage will end on the last day of the month for which a premium has been paid. Medical, Dental, Vision, Legal, Supplemental Life, Basic and Expanded Dependent Life, and AD&D premiums are paid in advance. For example, if you choose to cancel this coverage and you receive a paycheck on July 1, you will be covered through the end of July.

Employee's Children Enrollment Priority

Employee's children are designated as an enrollment priority group under Georgia Cyber Academy's charter contract. This means that employees may enroll their children at Georgia Cyber Academy ahead of students that may be waitlisted. Employee's children may also be enrolled in Georgia Cyber Academy at any time per its Enrollment Policy.

PERSONNEL/STUDENT INFORMATION SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Information Confidentiality

Employees who have access to student and business information must keep that information in a secure location. This policy is always intended to alert employees to the need for discretion and is not intended to inhibit normal business communication or any law regarding public records. Georgia Cyber Academy (GCA) adheres to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

As a technology-based education school, GCA has a vital interest in protecting the confidentiality of student information. Not only is this a requirement of a federal law known as FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), but it is also a business imperative because parents and customers expect that we will make only proper use of student information.

As GCA continues to grow, we remind everyone of the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of student education records. Student education records include more than just a student's grades, social security number, individualized education plan and similar records. It includes almost all records directly related to a student and maintained by educational institutions and the contractors acting on their behalf, such as GCA. Student records must be treated with the utmost care and confidentiality, and any internal sharing must be limited to other GCA employees who need them to fulfill their job responsibilities or only when you know that it is lawful to do so.

FERPA Violations could lead to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Personnel Files

Georgia Cyber Academy maintains a personnel file on each employee. You may view your personnel file upon request and in the presence of Human Resources. If you are interested in viewing your file, contact Human Resources.

No information in a personnel file will be disclosed to anyone outside GCA without the employee's consent, except as permitted or required by law. GCA reserves the right, at its discretion, to comply with official requests for information by law enforcement, public safety, or government agencies without notice.

To ensure that your personal information is always up to date, log into Paylocity to update any changes in your name, telephone number (work and personal), home address, email (work and personal), and the individual(s) to notify in case of an emergency.

Personal Information Disclosure to External Parties

Georgia Cyber Academy recognizes that prospective employers, financial institutions, residential property managers, and governmental agencies will need to verify employment, work history and salary for various reasons during your career at GCA. Information will be provided when it is accompanied by a former or current employee's signed authorization. Human Resources will return the form directly to the requesting party. Any requests for information that constitute a public records request will be handled in accordance with law.

Personnel Records

Georgia Cyber Academy strives to maintain an accurate and up-to-date personnel record for each employee. Employee personnel files may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Job application
- Position description
- Resume
- Employment Contract
- Training records
- Payroll information
- Disciplinary action records
- Performance reviews (most recent)
- Coaching and mentoring records
- Leave of Absence/FMLA documents

To ensure the accuracy of personnel records, please notify Human Resources immediately of the following changes along with updating your information directly in ADP:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Marital status
- Dependent status
- Tax status

Social Security Number Privacy

Officers and employees are permitted to access and use certain personal information, such as social security numbers, only as necessary and appropriate for such persons to carry out their assigned tasks for GCA and in accordance with GCA's policy.

The unauthorized access, viewing, use, disclosure, or the intentional public display of such information and the unauthorized removal of documents from GCA's premises that contain social security number information is prohibited and can result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

If you come into contact with social security numbers or other sensitive personal information without authorization from GCA or under circumstances outside of your assigned tasks, you may not use or disclose the information further, but must contact your supervisor and turn over to him or her all copies of the information in whatever form.

When necessary, documents containing social security information will be properly destroyed through shredding or other means prior to disposal to ensure confidential social security information is not disclosed.

For more information about whether and under what circumstances you may have access to this information, review your job description or contact your supervisor.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by GCA. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If GCA decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if GCA still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest.
- Other schools to which a student is transferring.
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student.
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of GCA.
- Accrediting organizations.
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that GCA not disclose directory information about them.

Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327). Or you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-8520

1996 (HIPAA) Privacy & Security Rules

The Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information ("Privacy Rule") establishes, for the first time, a set of national standards for the protection of certain health information. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS") issued a Privacy Rule to implement the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"). The Privacy Rule standards address the use and disclosure of individuals' health information – called "protected health information" by organizations subject to the Privacy Rule – called "covered entities," as well as standards for individuals' privacy rights to understand and control how their health information is used. Within HHS, the Office for Civil Rights ("OCR") has responsibility for implementing and enforcing the Privacy Rule with respect to voluntary compliance activities and civil money penalties.

A major goal of the Privacy Rule is to assure that individuals' health information is properly protected while allowing the flow of health information needed to provide and promote high-quality health care and to protect the public's health and well-being. The Rule strikes a balance that permits important uses of information, while protecting the privacy of people who seek care and healing. Given that the healthcare marketplace is diverse, the Rule is designed to be flexible and comprehensive to cover the variety of uses and disclosures that need to be addressed.

To view the entire Rule, and for other additional helpful information about how it applies, see the OCR website: <https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa> In the event of a conflict between this summary and the Rule, the Rule governs.

APPENDICES

GaPSC Code of Ethics

Effective October 15, 2019

505- 6 -.01 The Code of Ethics for Educators

Introduction. The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.

Definitions

“Breach of contract” occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

“Certificate” refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Professional Standards Commission.

“Child endangerment” occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.

“Educator” is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, “educator” also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.

“Student” is any individual enrolled in the state’s public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the school year of graduation.

“Complaint” is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A “complaint” will be deemed a request to investigate.

“Revocation” is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.

“Denial” is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate. (i) “Suspension” is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Professional Standards Commission.

“Reprimand” admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

“Warning” warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

“Monitoring” is the quarterly appraisal of the educator’s conduct by the Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC).

The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.

“No Probable Cause” is a determination by the Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken, or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.

Standards

Standard 1: Legal Compliance - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral

turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

Standard 2: Conduct with Students - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

- committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
- committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
- committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
- engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student that would violate a state or federal law;

- soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;

- furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student;

- failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).

Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

- being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc.).

For the purposes of this standard, an educator shall be considered "under the influence" if the educator exhibits one or more of the following indicators, including but not limited to: slurred speech, enlarged pupils, bloodshot eyes, general personality changes, lack of physical coordination, poor motor skills, memory problems, concentration problems, etc.

Standard 4: Honesty - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

- professional qualifications, criminal history, college, or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;

- information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;

- information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;

- reasons for absences or leaves.

- information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and

- information submitted in the course of professional practice.

Standard 5: Public Funds and Property - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

- misusing public or school-related funds;

- failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;

- submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);

- co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and

using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

soliciting students or parents of students, or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;

accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;

tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and

coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.

Standard 7: Confidential Information - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;

sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;

violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing, or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and

violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

Standard 8: Required Reports - An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;

failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and

failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures required reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

Standard 9: Professional Conduct - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract; any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position; or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

Standard 10: Testing - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

committing any act that breaches Test Security; and compromising the integrity of the assessment.

Reporting

Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).

The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.

Disciplinary Action

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the educator:

unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);

disciplinary action against a certificate on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);

Order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);

notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20-3-295);

suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate

violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16-13-111); and

any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.

An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or, in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5

Employee Sexual Harassment Policy

The intent of this policy is to comply with the Title IX federal regulations concerning sexual harassment. To the extent that additional requirements are specified in federal law or regulations, or to the extent Title IX federal regulations are revised, Georgia Cyber Academy (GCA) shall comply with such additional or revised requirements.

Definitions

Actual knowledge means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to GCA's Title IX Coordinator or to any official or employee of GCA. This notice requirement is not met when the only GCA official or employee with actual knowledge is the respondent.

Complainant means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Days for the purpose of this policy means "school days."

Deliberately indifferent means a response to sexual harassment that is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

Formal complaint means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that GCA investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in a GCA education program or activity. A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator in GCA's nondiscrimination notice posted on its website. As used in this policy, the phrase "document filed by a complainant" means a document or electronic submission (such as by electronic mail or through an online portal provided by GCA) that contains the complainant's physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that the complainant is the person filing the formal complaint. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a complainant or otherwise a party under this policy.

Respondent means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

An employee of GCA conditioning the provision of a GCA aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;

Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to GCA's education program or activity; or

"Sexual assault"- an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; or

"Dating Violence"- sex-based violence committed by a person-

who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and

where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

The length of the relationship.

The type of relationship.

The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship; or

"Domestic Violence"- sex-based violence which includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction; or

"Sex-based Stalking" - engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to-

fear for his or her safety or the safety of others; or

suffer substantial emotional distress.

Supportive measures means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or GCA's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. GCA shall presume that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process. The grievance process will be followed before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent. Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures. GCA shall maintain as confidential any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of GCA to provide the supportive measures. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures.

Nondiscrimination Policy - It is the policy of GCA to comply fully with the requirements of state law, Title IX and its accompanying regulations.

GCA prohibits discrimination based on sex and sexual harassment of employees by other employees, board members, students, volunteers, or others over whom GCA has authority in any GCA education program or activity. Education program or activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which GCA exercises substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs.

GCA shall respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent when it has actual knowledge of sexual harassment against a person in an education program or activity.

GCA shall require that any individual designated and authorized as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or any person designated to facilitate an informal resolution process, not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent. GCA shall ensure that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, will receive training on the definition of sexual harassment, the scope of GCA's education program or activity, how to conduct an investigation and grievance process including questioning, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable, and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias. GCA shall ensure that decision-makers receive training on any technology to be used during questioning, and on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant. GCA also shall ensure that investigators receive training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence. Any materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, shall not rely on sex stereotypes and shall promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment.

Reports or complaints made to GCA regarding alleged sexual harassment in violation of Title IX shall be processed in accordance with the following process:

Grievance Process

Reports or complaints may be verbal or written and may be made at any time (including during non-business hours), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail using the contact information posted on the GCA website.

Any employee, applicant for employment, or other person wishing to report or file a complaint alleging a violation as described above shall promptly notify either the principal at his/her school or the Title IX Coordinator designated and authorized by GCA. Any employee who receives information alleging sexual harassment of an

employee shall report it to the principal or Title IX Coordinator. If the alleged offending individual is the principal, the report or complaint should be made by the complainant to the Title IX Coordinator.

The Title IX Coordinator shall promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures as defined in this policy, consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint. GCA shall treat complainants and respondents equitably by following this grievance process before punishing the respondent or providing remedies to the complainant. Remedies will be designed to restore or preserve equal access to GCA's education program or activity. Such remedies may include the same individualized services described as "supportive measures." However, remedies need not be non-disciplinary or non-punitive and need not avoid burdening the respondent.

Formal Complaint. Upon receipt of a formal complaint, GCA shall within 10 days provide the following written notice to the parties who are known: (A) Notice of GCA's grievance process; Notice of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment, including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview. Sufficient details include the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident, if known. The written notice shall include a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process. The written notice shall inform the parties that they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and may inspect and review evidence. The written notice shall inform the parties of any provision in the employee code of conduct that prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process. The notice shall describe the range of or list the possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies that GCA may implement following any determination of responsibility.

If, in the course of an investigation, GCA decides to investigate allegations about the complainant or respondent that are not included in the notice provided pursuant to paragraph (4)(B), GCA shall provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

Dismissal of a formal complaint. GCA shall investigate the allegations in a formal complaint. If the conduct alleged in the formal complaint would not constitute sexual harassment as defined herein even if proved or did not occur in GCA's education program or activity or in the United States, then GCA shall dismiss the formal complaint with regard to that conduct for purposes of sexual harassment under Title IX; such a dismissal does not preclude action under another provision of GCA's policies.

GCA may dismiss the formal complaint or any allegations therein, if at any time during the investigation: A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein; the respondent is no longer employed by GCA; or specific circumstances prevent GCA from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

Upon a dismissal required or permitted pursuant to paragraph (5), GCA shall promptly send written notice of and reason(s) for the dismissal simultaneously to the parties.

Consolidation of formal complaints. GCA may consolidate formal complaints as to allegations of sexual harassment against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more

respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances. Where a grievance process involves more than one complainant or more than one respondent, references to the singular “party,” “complainant,” or “respondent” include the plural, as applicable.

Investigation of a formal complaint. After providing written notice to the parties of the receipt of a formal complaint, GCA shall have 15 days to investigate. When investigating a formal complaint and throughout the grievance process, GCA shall—

Assume the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility and not place such burdens on the parties provided that GCA cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional's or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless GCA obtains that party's voluntary, written consent to do so;

Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence;

Not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence;

Provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and not limit the choice or presence of advisor for either the complainant or respondent in any meeting or grievance proceeding; however, GCA may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties;

Provide, to a party whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate;

Provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any non-privileged evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which GCA does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation. Prior to completion of the investigative report, GCA shall send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties shall have at least 10 days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report. GCA shall make all such evidence subject to the parties' inspection and review available at any meeting to give each party equal opportunity to refer to such evidence during the meeting, including for purposes of cross-examination; and

Create within 5 days an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, and at least 10 days prior to the determination regarding responsibility, send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the investigative report in an electronic format or a hard copy, for their review and written response.

Reported sexual harassment determined not to be sexual harassment as defined under Title IX may be investigated in accordance with Policy GAAA.

Questions. After GCA has sent the investigative report to the parties and before reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker(s) shall afford a 10 day period for each party to have the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. GCA shall not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege. The decision-maker(s) shall explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

Determination regarding responsibility. The decision-maker(s), who cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s), shall, within 10 days of the conclusion of the question and answer period, issue a written determination regarding responsibility. To reach this determination, GCA shall apply the preponderance of the evidence standard of evidence to formal complaints against students, to formal complaints against employees and to all complaints of sexual harassment.

The written determination shall include—

Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment as defined in this policy;

A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, and methods used to gather other evidence;

Findings of fact supporting the determination;

Conclusions regarding the application of GCA's policies to the facts;

A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions GCA imposes on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to GCA's education program or activity will be provided by GCA to the complainant; and

GCA's procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

GCA shall provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously. The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that GCA provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies.

Appeals. GCA shall offer both parties 10 days after a decision for an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from a GCA's dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases:

(A) Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;

New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and

The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

As to all appeals, GCA shall:

Notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties;

Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator;

Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal complies with the training standards set forth in this policy;

Give both parties a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome;

Issue a written decision describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result; and

Provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties within 10 days of the receipt of the appeal.

Informal resolution. GCA shall not require as a condition of employment or continuing employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to an investigation and adjudication of formal complaints of sexual harassment consistent with this policy. Similarly, GCA shall not require the parties to participate in an informal resolution process and shall not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed. However, at any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility GCA may facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication, provided that GCA—

Provides to the parties a written notice disclosing: The allegations, the requirements of the informal resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations, provided, however, that at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint, and any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared;

Obtains the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

Recordkeeping. GCA shall maintain for a period of seven years records of—

Each sexual harassment investigation including any determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and any remedies provided to the complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to GCA's education program or activity;

Any appeal and the result therefrom;

Any informal resolution and the result therefrom; and

All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process. GCA shall make these training materials publicly available on its website, or if GCA does not maintain a website, shall make these materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public.

For each response required under GCA's process for responding to a sexual harassment formal complaint, GCA shall create, and maintain for a period of seven years, records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment. In each instance, GCA shall document the basis for its conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent, and document that it has taken measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to GCA's education program or activity. If GCA does not provide a complainant with supportive measures, then GCA shall document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. The documentation of certain bases or measures does not limit GCA in the future from providing additional explanations or detailing additional measures taken.

Confidentiality. GCA shall keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by federal or state law or regulations, or to carry

out the purposes of Title IX requirements, including the conduct of any investigation or judicial proceeding arising thereunder.

Retaliation Prohibited.

No GCA or person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under Title IX. Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for employee code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, constitutes retaliation.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed in accordance with the procedures specified in Policy GAAA.

The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation prohibited under subparagraph (a).

Charging an individual with an employee code of conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a grievance proceeding under this policy does not constitute retaliation prohibited under subparagraph (a); provided, however, that a determination regarding responsibility, alone, is not sufficient to conclude that any party made a materially false statement in bad faith.

Time Frame.

GCA shall allow for the temporary delay of the grievance process or the limited extension of time frames for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension and the reasons for the action. Good cause may include considerations such as the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.

NOTICE: GCA is required by Title IX and its implementing regulations to notify employees, students, parents or legal guardians, applicants for admission and employment, and professional organizations holding professional agreements with GCA that GCA does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the operation of its education programs or activities, including admissions and employment.

Contact information for GCA's Title IX Coordinator is located on its website and in all handbooks or catalogs that GCA makes available to employees, students, parents or legal guardians, applicants for admission and employment, and professional organizations holding professional agreements with GCA.

Inquiries about Title IX and its implementing regulations may be referred to GCA's Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, or both.

Infectious Disease Control Policy

Georgia Cyber Academy will take proactive steps to protect the workplace in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. It is the goal of Georgia Cyber Academy during any such time period to strive to operate effectively and ensure that all essential services are continuously provided and that employees are safe within the workplace.

Georgia Cyber Academy is committed to providing authoritative information about the nature and spread of infectious diseases, including symptoms and signs to watch for, as well as required steps to be taken in the event of an illness or outbreak.

Preventing the Spread of Infection in the Workplace

Georgia Cyber Academy will ensure a clean workplace, including the regular cleaning of objects and areas that are frequently used, such as bathrooms, break rooms, conference rooms, door handles and railings. A committee will be designated to monitor and coordinate events around an infectious disease outbreak, as well as to create work rules that could be implemented to promote safety through infection control.

We ask all employees to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of infectious disease in the workplace. The best strategy remains the most obvious—frequent hand washing with warm, soapy water; covering your mouth whenever you sneeze or cough; and discarding used tissues in wastebaskets. We will also provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas.

Unless otherwise notified, our normal attendance and leave policies will remain in place. Individuals who believe they may face particular challenges reporting to work during an infectious disease outbreak should take steps to develop any necessary contingency plans. For example, employees might want to arrange for alternative sources of childcare should schools close and/or speak with supervisors about the potential to work from home temporarily or on an alternative work schedule.

Limiting Travel

All nonessential travel should be avoided until further notice. Employees who travel as an essential part of their job should consult with management on appropriate actions. Business-related travel outside the United States will not be authorized until further notice.

Employees should avoid crowded public transportation when possible. Alternative scheduling options, ride-share resources and/or parking assistance will be provided on a case-by-case basis. Contact human resources for more information.

Telecommuting

Telework requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis. While not all positions will be eligible, all requests for temporary telecommuting should be submitted to your manager for consideration.

Staying Home When Ill

Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill. We provide paid sick time and other benefits to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness. Employees must notify their immediate supervisor as soon as they know they will not be able to report to work due to illness unless their illness prevents them from doing so. (Text messages are not an appropriate way to inform GCA Leadership that you are taking a sick day). If three or more consecutive sick days are taken, you might be required to provide a note from a medical professional. The note can be given directly to Human Resources. Please note that a manager has the discretion to ask for a note from a medical professional even if you have not been out sick for three (3) days.

During an infectious disease outbreak, it is critical that employees do not report to work while they are ill and/or experiencing the following symptoms: Examples include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people with an infectious illness such as the flu remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. Employees who report to work ill will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines. Now considering COVID19 employees experiencing these symptoms must stay home 14-days with a doctor's note before returning.

Requests for Medical Information and/or Documentation

If you are out sick or show symptoms of being ill, it may become necessary to request information from you and/or your health care provider. In general, we would request medical information to confirm your need to be absent, to show whether and how an absence relates to the infection, and to know that it is appropriate for you to return to work. As always, we expect and appreciate your cooperation if and when medical information is sought.

Confidentiality of Medical Information

Our policy is to treat any medical information as a confidential medical record. In furtherance of this policy, any disclosure of medical information is in limited circumstances with supervisors, managers, first aid and safety personnel, and government officials as required by law.

Social Distancing Guidelines for Workplace Infectious Disease Outbreaks

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, Georgia Cyber Academy may implement these social distancing guidelines to minimize the spread of the disease among the staff.

During the workday, employees are requested to:

Avoid meeting people face-to-face. Employees are encouraged to use the telephone, online conferencing, e-mail, or instant messaging to conduct business as much as possible, even when participants are in the same building. If a face-to-face meeting is unavoidable, minimize the meeting time, choose a large meeting room, and sit at least six (6) feet from each other if possible; avoid person-to-person contact such as shaking hands. Avoid any unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings, workshops, and training sessions.

Do not congregate in work rooms, pantries, copier rooms or other areas where people socialize.

Bring lunch and eat at your desk or away from others (avoid lunchrooms and crowded restaurants).

Encourage members and others to request information and orders via phone and e-mail in order to minimize person-to-person contact. Have the orders, materials, and information ready for fast pickup or delivery.

Follow all communicated guidelines and protocols that may be put in place to address the spread of an infectious disease event.

Outside activities

Employees might be encouraged to the extent possible to:

Avoid public transportation (walk, cycle, drive a car) or go early or late to avoid rush-hour crowding on public transportation.

Avoid recreational or other leisure classes, meetings, activities, etc., where employees might come into contact with infected individuals or contaminated surfaces.

School Media Relations Policy

Executive Director and/or the Superintendent will consult with the Chair of the Board if any student-related publicity touches on matters related to school governance, overall school performance, or would otherwise touch on matters that reflect poorly on GCA, its staff members, or Board of Directors.

Media Contact

Any individual working for GCA who is contacted by the media regarding any Schoolrelated matter, including any matter regarding student(s), curriculum, or other aspect of School operations, will notify the Executive Director and Superintendent immediately and direct the media inquiry to the Executive Director.

The GCA Executive Director will notify the GCA Board Chair promptly upon being contacted for comment by the media.

Any Board member contacted by the media will notify the Board Chair promptly and direct the media inquiry to the Executive Director.

Press Releases

All press releases and other proactive and reactive GCA media communications will be coordinated with the Board Chair, Superintendent and Executive Director.

Media Access to School Events

The media will have access to all GCA School events to which the public has been invited.

When members of the media cover School activities other than public events, they must have the approval of GCA before interviewing, filming, or photographing staff or students. Under no circumstances will any student be interviewed, taped, or photographed, without prior written permission from his or her parent or guardian.

Georgia Cyber Academy Employee Acceptable Use Policy

The purpose of Georgia Cyber Academy's acceptable use policy is to provide the procedures, rules, guidelines, and the code of conduct for use of technology and the information network at Georgia Cyber Academy.

Definition

The definition of "information network" is any configuration of hardware and software that connects users. The network includes all of the computer hardware, operating system software, application software and stored files. This includes but is not limited to electronic mail, local databases, externally accessed databases, recorded magnetic or optical media, clip art, digital images, digitized information, communications technologies, portable/hand-held devices and new technologies as they become available. Standalone workstations are also governed by this acceptable use policy.

Introduction

Georgia Cyber Academy provides resources for teaching and learning, collaboration, communication services and business data services by maintaining access to local, regional, national and international sources of information.

Georgia Cyber Academy information resources will be used by members of GCA community with respect for the public trust through which they have been provided and in accordance with policy and regulations established by Georgia Cyber Academy. These procedures do not attempt to articulate all required or prescribed behavior by its users.

Successful operation of the network requires that all users conduct themselves in a responsible, decent, ethical, and polite manner while using the network. The user is ultimately responsible for his/her actions in accessing network services inside and outside of the Georgia Cyber Academy network while using Georgia Cyber Academy-issued equipment. The user is solely responsible for all resources issued or assigned to him/her. This includes equipment as well as login / specialized access information. Personal equipment should not be used to access Georgia Cyber Academy's resources. Georgia Cyber Academy monitors all Internet and local network activity. Disciplinary action will be taken for any individual abusing or misusing technology resources.

Disclaimer

With access to computers, and world-wide information sharing, comes the availability of materials that may not be considered of educational value in the context of the school setting. On a global network, it is impossible to control all materials, and an industrious user may discover controversial information. Georgia Cyber Academy

maintains and monitors the use of filters for Internet content. Georgia Cyber Academy firmly believes that the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may obtain materials that are not consistent with the educational goals of GCA.

Guidelines

Access to the networks and to the information technology environment within Georgia Cyber Academy is a privilege and must be treated as such by all users of the network and its associated systems.

Georgia Cyber Academy systems will only be used for the purposes of research, education and school-related business and operations.

Any system which requires password access, or for which Georgia Cyber Academy requires an account, may only be used by the authorized user. Account owners are ultimately responsible for all activity on their device and within their accounts.

All communications and information accessible via Georgia Cyber Academy systems should be treated as property of Georgia Cyber Academy.

Georgia Cyber Academy actively monitors all Internet and local network activity, to include individual actions and activity.

Staff members are responsible for returning all Georgia Cyber Academy property, including hardware and software, upon termination or retirement. Staff will be held accountable for the monetary value of any unreturned or damaged equipment.

Unacceptable Uses

Georgia Cyber Academy has the right to take disciplinary action, remove computer and networking privileges and/or take legal action for any activity characterized as unethical and unacceptable. Unacceptable use activities constitute, but are not limited to, any activity through which any user does the following.

Violates such matters as institutional or third-party copyright, license agreements or other contracts. The unauthorized use of and/or copying of software is illegal.

Copies or reproduces any licensed software on Georgia Cyber Academy computing equipment, except as expressly permitted by the specific software license. Unauthorized use of software is regarded as a serious matter and any such use is without the consent of Georgia Cyber Academy.

Installs unauthorized software or applications for use on Georgia Cyber Academy computers.

Interferes with or disrupts other network users, services, or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, the following:

distribution of unsolicited advertising.

propagation of computer worms or viruses.

distribution of quantities of information that overwhelm the system (for example, "chain letters," "network games" or "broadcasting" messages.

utilization of the network to make unauthorized entry into any resource accessible via the network.

Seeks to gain, or gains, unauthorized access to information resources, obtains copies of or modifies files or other data, or gains and communicates passwords belonging to other users.

Uses or knowingly allows another to use any computer, computer network, computer system, program or software to devise or execute a scheme to defraud or to obtain money, property, services or other things of value by false pretenses, promises or representations. ❖ Destroys, alters, dismantles, disfigures, prevents rightful

access to or otherwise interferes with the integrity of computer-based information, its operation, and/or information resources whether on standalone or networked computers.

Invades the privacy of individuals or entities.

Uses the network for commercial or political activity.

Uses the network to store, distribute or access materials inappropriate to the school setting.

Uses Georgia Cyber Academy systems to compromise its integrity ("hacking" software).

Submits, publishes or displays any defamatory inaccurate, racially offensive, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or threatening materials or messages either public or private.

Uses Georgia Cyber Academy systems for illegal, harassing, vandalizing, inappropriate or obscene purposes, or in support of such activities. Illegal activities will be defined as a violation of local, state and/or federal laws. Harassment is defined as slurs, comments, jokes, innuendoes, unwelcome compliments, cartoons, pranks and/or other verbal conduct relating to an individual that has the following purposes or effects.

creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or school performance.

interfering with school operations.

Vandalism is defined as any attempt to temporarily or permanently harm or destroy an operating system, application software or data, or hardware.

Georgia Cyber Academy Rights

Georgia Cyber Academy reserves the right to do the following:

Monitor all activity on Georgia Cyber Academy equipment and networks by any user.

Make determinations on whether specific uses of the network are consistent with this acceptable use policy.

Log network use and monitor storage disk space utilization by users.

Deem what is appropriate use based on the requirements of law, this policy, and Georgia Cyber Academy's legitimate pedagogical concerns.

Remove a user's access to the network at any time it is determined that the user is engaged in unauthorized activity or violating this acceptable use policy and suspend any accounts during an investigation of possible violations of this policy.

Cooperate fully with any investigation concerning or relating to Georgia Cyber Academy.

Georgia Cyber Academy Responsibilities

Georgia Cyber Academy will do the following:

Respect and enforce copyright laws and regulations.

Take prudent steps to develop, implement and maintain security procedures to ensure the integrity of individual and Georgia Cyber Academy files. However, information on any computer system cannot be guaranteed to be inaccessible by other users.

Attempt to provide error-free and dependable access to technology resources associated with Georgia Cyber Academy. However, Georgia Cyber Academy cannot be held liable for any information that may be lost, damaged or unavailable due to technical or other difficulties.

Thoroughly investigate alleged misuse of the Internet and/or Georgia Cyber Academy prior to permanent denial of access to Georgia Cyber Academy resources.

Conduct assessments of inappropriate sites.

Monitor student & staff Internet activities to ensure students and employees are not accessing inappropriate sites. GCA will use technology protection measures to protect students from inappropriate access.

Report child pornography to law enforcement. Georgia Cyber Academy and school technical support staff who are working with any computer or portable device and come across sexually explicit images of children must report this to local law enforcement. The report must include the name and address of the owner or person in possession of the computer.

Disciplinary Action

This acceptable use policy is applicable to any member of Georgia Cyber Academy's community and refers to all information resources whether individually controlled, shared, stand alone or networked. Disciplinary action, if any, for students, staff and other users will be consistent with Georgia Cyber Academy's standard policies and practices.

Where use of external networks is involved, policies governing such use also are applicable and must be adhered to. Violations can constitute cause of revocation of access privileges, suspension, or permanent removal of access to Georgia Cyber Academy resources, other school disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action. Exact disciplinary measures will be determined on a case by case basis.

Any user who violates the terms of this policy or otherwise misuses the Internet and/or technology to access or send inappropriate material will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including for students: removal of access, suspension, or withdrawal; for staff: a recommendation that an individual's employment with Georgia Cyber Academy be terminated and/or the suspension of his/her teaching certificate.

Violations of the laws of the United States or the state of Georgia also may subject the user to criminal prosecution.

Employee Acceptable Use Agreement Code of Conduct

Proper behavior, as it relates to the use of technology, is no different than proper behavior in all other aspects of Georgia Cyber Academy activities. All users are expected to use Georgia Cyber Academy technology resources in a legal, responsible, ethical, and polite manner. The Code of Conduct guidelines are intended to clarify those expectations as they apply to computer and network usage and are consistent with the Georgia Cyber Academy Policy on Use of Technology Resources in Instruction. An employee who knowingly violates any portion of the Code of Conduct expectations will be subject to suspension of access and/or revocation of privileges on the Georgia Cyber Academy's system.

Employees will practice responsible use of digital information regarding intellectual property including complying with software licenses, copyright laws, and all other state and federal laws governing intellectual property. Employees will practice safe and appropriate online behavior including using professional etiquette while communicating online. Improper use of Georgia Cyber Academy technology resources is prohibited including but not limited to:

- Using racist, profane, pornographic, sexually oriented, or obscene language or materials

- Attempting to send or sending anonymous messages of any kind

- Using the network to access inappropriate and / or harmful materials

- Bypassing Georgia Cyber Academy's security measures to access sites that are filtered on Georgia Cyber Academy network

- Encrypting communications so as to avoid security review or monitoring by the system administrator.

- Using the network to provide addresses or other personal information that others may use inappropriately.

- Purposely engaging in activity that may: harass, threaten, defame, slander, libel, malign, or abuse another (i.e., individual or group).

- Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic messages is prohibited. Attempts to

- read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users or deliberate interference with the ability of other system users to send/receive electronic mail is prohibited.

- Using the network for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any other activity prohibited by Georgia Cyber Academy policy or guidelines

Employees will use the technology resources in a positive and responsible manner that promotes creativity & innovation, collaboration, communication, critical thinking & problem solving. Improper use of Georgia Cyber Academy's technology resources is prohibited including but not limited to:

- Using the network for political activity, financial gain, or commercial activity

- Attempting to harm or harming equipment, materials or data

- Changing any computer configurations and/or settings.

Installing software, including freeware and file sharing services, without permission from the Director of Technology or designee.

Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance may be viewed as violation of Georgia Cyber Academy guidelines and possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses, malware or spyware.

Streaming media, such as radio, games, video, etc., for non-educational purposes G. Proxy sites - Attempting to bypass or bypassing, the filtering device by using sites such as but not limited to proxy sites on Georgia Cyber Academy's electronic communications system

Running security programs or utilities that reveal or exploit weaknesses in the security of a system such as password cracking programs, packet sniffers, or port scanners or any other nonapproved programs on Georgia Cyber Academy technology resources

Otherwise engaging in acts against the aims and purposes of Georgia Cyber Academy as specified in its governing documents or in rules, regulations and procedures adopted from time to time

Employees will understand the negative impact of inappropriate technology use including online bullying and harassment, hacking, intentional virus setting, invasion of privacy, and piracy of software, music, video and other media.

Employees will log in to the Georgia Cyber Academy network using their own login credentials. Account information and passwords, or similar information used for identification and authorization purposes, must be kept private. Passwords should not be written down and left in a location where others may find it. The individual in whose name a system account is issued will be responsible at all times for its proper use.

In order to help preserve both privacy and security, neither still photography nor video capturing is allowed in person and virtual school environments unless directed by a member of a faculty member to meet an educational goal or approved by an authorized member of the administration, faculty or staff. Both behavioral and legal action may be taken against individuals not respecting the privacy and security rights.

Employees will use technology resources cautiously to prevent damage.

System users must maintain their personal files including backing up files and deleting outdated files on a regular basis.

Employees are asked to conserve Georgia Cyber Academy technology resources (such as network bandwidth and storage) by limiting usage to educational purposes. System users must not: degrade the performance of Georgia Cyber Academy technology resources (i.e. streaming video, streaming audio, and Internet radio); deprive an authorized Georgia Cyber Academy user access to a Georgia Cyber Academy resource; obtain extra resources beyond those allocated; circumvent Georgia Cyber Academy computer security measures.

Creative Credit and Copyright. Employees have the right to protect their own creative works. Additionally, Employees must exercise academic integrity in a fair and legal manner when using other people's creative works. Failure to appropriately cite ideas or work other than your own will result in adverse academic and behavioral action. Academic integrity protects against the following:

Cheating is fabricating written assignments; giving or receiving aid to another student without the consent of the instructor on tests, quizzes, assignments, exams; unauthorized access of teacher's editions or answer keys.

Cheating also includes the use of technology such as computers, phones, cameras, or any other device that provides access to unauthorized information related to graded course material, tests, quizzes, assignments, or examinations.

Double Assignments are also a form of cheating. This is defined as an assignment that is used to fulfill the requirements of more than one course without prior approval from all involved instructors.

Colluding is allowing one's work to be copied or submitted by another student. This applies to individual as well as group work where the Employees are given individual grades. It also applies to work that is transferred electronically and then submitted by another student. Joint student projects where information is combined for a final product submission are acceptable.

Plagiarizing is the act of presenting the ideas or works of another person as one's own. This includes presenting information, ideas, phrasing, words, artwork, music, figures, diagrams, graphs, song lyrics, films, maps,

illustrations, data, computer programs, emails, CDs, and electronic files from the Internet. All of these must be acknowledged with the proper documentation. Consult your instructor or GCA links for proper citation practices. All assignments submitted to instructors should contain the proper citation. Plagiarism occurs when a student does one of the following:

fails to cite borrowed, quoted, or paraphrased material, even by accident

deliberately intends to deceive through lack of citation

Uses strings of words from a cited source without indicating these words are not his own (attempted paraphrase without quotations, even if there is a correct citation)

Carelessly or inaccurately citing quoted or paraphrased material is not plagiarism. This type of error is attributed to style or formatting. For example, if you submit an MLA works cited instead of an APA, then this is an inaccurate citation. You may lose style or formatting points; however, it is not plagiarism.

The Georgia Cyber Academy strongly believes in the educational value of the Internet and recognizes its potential to support curriculum and student learning by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Georgia Cyber Academy also believes this educational opportunity demands personal responsibility and an understanding of the acceptable use policy for the Internet by Employees and staff.

By signing the handbook acknowledgement, the employee acknowledges that they have read and understand the rules and requirements of accessing information on the Internet. Additionally, the employee agrees to abide by the rules and further understands that any violation of the rules is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense.

Also, the employee understands that all network activity is being monitored. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of the Internet, files they created and/or saved and e-mails sent or received. They understand that technological resources are provided by Georgia Cyber Academy solely for the purpose of supporting them in their role as a Georgia Cyber Academy employee.

They also acknowledge that they understand they are responsible for any activity on their assigned computer. The employee further agrees that if they are not physically at their computer, it will not be logged in to with their credentials. They also understand that it is their responsibility to monitor students under their supervision any time they are using technology tools and that they must abide by the same acceptable use policies.

Should the employee commit any violation, their access privileges may be revoked. Lastly, disciplinary and/or appropriate legal action may also be taken if the employee violates this policy in any manner.

Employee Complaint Procedures

Section 1. Employee Grievances

There are times when disputes arise between employees or between an employee and GCA administration. It is expected that during any dispute, all employees will model the conflict resolution skills that they advance to GCA students. Should it become necessary, this procedure is intended to provide a simple, expeditious, and fair process for resolving employee complaints at the lowest possible level and with a minimum of conflict and formal proceedings.

No employee will be subject to reprisal as a result of filing a complaint under this procedure.

Section 2. Scope of Complaint Procedure

Any current employee may file a complaint concerning his or her employment or the implementation of personnel policies. The complaint should be in writing, and every attempt should have been made to settle the issue with individual conversations before bringing a formal grievance.

Exclusions

This procedure may not be used to complain about the following:

Performance ratings contained in the employee's personnel evaluations

The employee's job performance

Termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension, or reprimand of employee

Revocation, suspension, or denial of certificates to all certified employees

Sexual Harassment. Please refer to the GCA Sexual Harassment policy for the procedures required for a complaint relating to sexual harassment.

Section 3. Employee Grievance Procedure

Step One: Informal Discussion. An employee having a grievance hereunder shall make a good- faith effort to resolve the matter through informal discussions with the individual(s) involved in the matter and/or with the employee's direct supervisor, within five (5) working days of the occurrence or cause of such matter.

Step Two: Administrative Review. If the matter cannot be resolved through informal discussion, the aggrieved employee may submit their complaint, in writing, to the Human Resources Department and the Principal or Assistant Director of the department within which the employee works within ten (10) working days after the most recent event upon which the complaint is based.

If the matter involves the Principal or Assistant Director, the aggrieved employee may skip to Step Three. If the matter involves the Director of the Department the aggrieved employee may skip to Step Four. If the matter involves the Superintendent, the Chief Financial Officer or the Executive Director, the aggrieved employee may skip to Step Five.

The written complaint should include identification of the problem, a description of the efforts undertaken to informally resolve the dispute, and a proposed resolution. The Principal/Assistant Director and Human Resources representative will make every reasonable effort to schedule a meeting to occur within five (5) working days of receipt of the complaint with the Principal/Assistant Director and any other person(s) whose actions or decisions give rise to the matter. At such meeting, each party will have the opportunity to be heard and to request relief. Within three (3) working days or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable, the Principal/Assistant Director or Human Resources representative will issue a written recommendation as to how the matter should be resolved. All parties present at the meeting shall receive copies of the written recommendation.

Step Three: Review by the Department Director. If the aggrieved employee remains dissatisfied after administrative review, the employee may, within ten (10) working days of receipt of the written recommendation provided under Step Two, submit the complaint to the Director of the Department in which the employee works, with a copy to the Human Resources department. The Department Director and a Human Resources representative will meet with the employee to go over the complaint and discuss the matter with all parties involved. This meeting shall take place within ten (10) working days of the Director's receipt of the complaint, or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable given the circumstances. The Director shall make every reasonable effort to prepare a written decision within five (5) working days of the meeting with the employee. All parties present at the meeting shall receive copies of the written decision

Step Four: Review by the Superintendent. If the aggrieved employee remains dissatisfied after review by the Department Director, the employee may, within ten (10) working days of receipt of the written recommendation provided under Step Three, submit the complaint to the Superintendent with a copy to the Human Resources department. The Superintendent and a Human Resources representative will meet with the employee to go over the complaint and discuss the matter with all parties involved. This meeting shall take place within ten (10) working days of the Superintendent's receipt of the complaint, or as soon thereafter as is reasonably practicable given the circumstances. The Superintendent shall make every reasonable effort to prepare a written decision within five (5) working days of the meeting with the employee. All parties present at the meeting shall receive copies of the written decision.

Step Five: Review by the Board or its Designee. If the aggrieved employee has a complaint against the Superintendent, the Chief Financial Officer and/or the Executive Director, or has exhausted the steps above, he or she may bring their complaint to the Governing Board. All such complaints shall be filed within ten (10) working days of the decision being appealed or within ten (10) working days of the most recent event upon which the complaint is based, with the Chair of the Governance Committee. The complainant shall file the original complaint and a written explanation of why he or she disagrees with the decision of the Superintendent/Head of School if the matter is submitted pursuant to such a decision under Step Four.

A written decision will be issued by the Board or his/her designee as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than five (5) working days after the next meeting of the Board, or a committee thereof if the matter is delegated to a committee. In its discretion, the Board may delegate any such review to a Committee of the Board and hold a hearing in its discretion. If a hearing is held, it will be in closed session to the extent permitted by law. Board members who are interested parties shall recuse themselves from the hearing if such members have a conflict of interest in the subject of the appeal.

Mediation

At any time in the process, the employee may seek to resolve their complaint through mediation by notifying the person or people at the next step of the complaint process, in writing, that the employee seeks resolution through mediation. For example, if the employee is unsatisfied after Step 2, while submitting his or her written complaint to the Department Director, he or she may request mediation. GCA has the discretion to determine whether a particular complaint is appropriate for mediation and the appropriate form of mediation. Any deadlines under these Complaint Procedures will not run during any such mediation, or until the employee is notified that mediation will not be permitted for a particular complaint. If mediation fails to resolve the complaint, this procedure will resume where it left off prior to the mediation.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received the GCA Employee Handbook ("the Handbook") and understand that violations of the rules, protocols, procedures, guidelines, and policies contained in the Handbook, including the harassment and discrimination policies, could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

I further understand that the information contained in the Handbook represents guidelines for GCA and that GCA reserves the right to modify the Handbook or amend or terminate any policy, procedure, protocol, guidance, or employee benefit program at any time, with or without notice.

I further understand that the contents of the Handbook do not form an employment contract. No part of the handbook constitutes an express or implied contract, nor may any part of the handbook be construed as terms or conditions of a contract with GCA.

I understand that my employment is "at-will." Either GCA or I have the right to terminate my employment at any time. I further understand that no supervisor, manager, principal, or assistant director, director, or representative of GCA, other than Human Resources, Executive Director, Superintendent, or Board of Trustee, has any authority to enter into any agreement guaranteeing employment for any specific period of time. I also understand that any such agreement, if made, will not be enforceable unless it is in writing and signed by both parties.

I further understand that if I have any questions about the interpretation or application of any policies contained in the Handbook, I should direct these questions to my direct supervisor or Human Resources.

Employee Signature

Date

Employee Name Printed Social Security Number
(Last 4 Digits Only)

Date

This acknowledgement page is a requirement of employment. It may be executed via DocuSign or hardcopy. If executed in hardcopy, please forward the physically signed copy to Human Resources at gcahr@georgiacyber.org.