

# **Grove City Area Middle School**



## **2025-2026 Student/Parent Handbook**

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## **Welcome to The Grove City Area Middle School**

The Grove City Area Middle School is your school. We hope you will be proud to be a part of our student body. Your parents and other citizens invest in your school. Won't you join us to reward them by learning all that you can while you are here with us at the middle school?

Our middle school program is designed to help you grow academically, physically, and emotionally. When you believe you need help with school or other problems, please feel free to discuss your concern with your teachers, guidance counselor, nurse or principal. We are determined to work hard in cooperation with your parents to help you learn and grow. Together we can reach our goals. You can help by doing your part. Study hard, treat everyone with respect, and participate in our activities.

We are happy that you are here and we hope that you will look back on your years at the middle school with fond memories.

The Middle School Team

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### **Mission Statement**

The Grove City Middle School philosophy is designed to help students to grow and mature, physically, mentally, and emotionally. Student self-esteem and wellbeing represent the basis for academic achievement.

The Grove City Middle School strives to build strong self-worth through activities, academic success, and student-centered emphasis on school identifications and pride.

The goal of the faculty and students of the middle school will include the development of strategies to help students to appreciate the concepts of understanding themselves and others. The goals of quality education are part of the entire philosophy, not just a list of terms for planned courses and evaluative instruments.

## **Equal Opportunities**

Grove City Area School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex and handicap in its activities, programs or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX and Section 504.

All activities and courses, including industrial arts, vocational-technical education, home economics and physical education courses at Grove City Area School District are available to all students as required by Title VI, Title IX and Section 504. If there are any prerequisites, they are based on ability and aptitude, not on race, color, national origin, sex or any handicapping conditions. Persons physically or mentally handicapped may qualify for special services and instruction, and equipment modifications so they can successfully complete the course or participate in an activity.

For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures, contact our district office at 511 Highland Avenue, Grove City, PA 16127 (724) 458-6733.

For information regarding services, activities and facilities that are accessible to and usable by handicapped persons, contact the building principal.

Grove City Area School District offers vocational programs at George Junior Republic (a school for adjudicated males) in auto body, auto mechanics, building trades, audio visual communication, electronics, food service and welding. All students fifteen and one-half years of age and in the ninth grade at George Junior Republic are eligible for these programs. Entrance into these programs is made without regard to race, color, national origin, sex or handicap.

Grove City Area School District will take steps to assure that national origin, minority students who lack English skills can participate in all educational programs, services and activities. For information contact the building principal.

The Grove City Area School District seeks to identify any handicapped, or thought to be handicapped, child ages 3-6 and a resident of the Grove City Area School District. The specific purpose is to engage the parent/guardian and child in early identification and to institute the appropriate educational interventions. Confidentiality of information is guaranteed.

Parents/guardians of identified special education students are afforded specific rights by law. These rights are, but not limited to, annual program review, request for evaluation/re-evaluation, records review and specific procedural rights in matters of dispute over educational programs/placements.

For further information contact our district office 511 Highland Avenue, Grove City, PA 16127 (724) 458-6733.

## **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 educational 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."

1. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. 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.
2. Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school 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.
3. 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 interests;
  - 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 the school;
  - 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 the school 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 or technical assistance, you may call (202) 260-3887 (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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. 20202-5920

## **GCASD Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

*Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) –

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than required by law to determine program eligibility.

*Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –*

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

*Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use -

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the education curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The Grove City Area School District has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information survey and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. Grove City Area School District will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Grove City Area School District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation in the specific activity or survey. Grove City Area School District will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.

- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

*Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:*

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5901

# Daily Guidelines

## **What do I do when I arrive at school in the morning?**

All students are to enter through the Community Garden or bus entrance. Upon arriving to school either by bus, bicycle or walking, all students must enter the school immediately. All students are to report to bus hall in the Cafeteria or gymnasium and be seated in their assigned section. Students will remain in bus hall until 8:02 AM unless they have acquired a written hall pass from a specific teacher to leave the assigned area. The bus hall supervisor is in charge and will set the rules of conduct for the bus hall. Beginning at 8:02, students will report to their locker and/or their Eagle Time classroom.

## **What time does the middle school open?**

The middle school is open each day at 7:30 a.m.

## **What time does the middle school day begin?**

Students arriving to class after the 8:10 a.m. bell will be considered late for school and class. Consistent tardiness will result in the following disciplinary actions:

- 3rd late to school per month = parent meeting/call
- 6<sup>th</sup> late to school per month = lunch detention
- 9<sup>th</sup> late to school per month = ALC
- Additionally, each unexcused late to school results in (.2) days unlawful absences. Accumulation of these days may result in truancy charges being filed with the district magistrate.

## **How long are classes and how much time do I have between classes?**

Class length on a regular bell schedule is 40 minutes. Class length on an activity bell schedule is 36 minutes. There are two minutes between each class which is plenty of time to reach all destinations in the building.

## **At what time is school dismissed?**

School dismissal is at 3:12 p.m. Students are not to loiter in the building after the dismissal bell; however, you are encouraged to participate in any after school activity in progress provided that activity has an approved sponsor.

## **What do I do if I ride a bicycle to school?**

Students may ride bicycles to school, but for safety reasons, the practice of riding bicycles to school is not encouraged. The time of arrival and departure from school is a very busy traffic time. School authorities cannot guarantee the safety and wellbeing of bicycle riders. Bicycles are to be parked at the bike rack that is provided by the school district. Bicycle security is the responsibility of the student. The school does not accept the responsibility for bicycle security.

## **Are roller blades, scooters and skateboards permitted on school property?**

Roller blades, scooters and skateboards are not permitted on school grounds. Please contact the office regarding any extenuating circumstances.

## **What if I need to use a telephone?**

All phone calls of an urgent matter may be made from the office. Students may use this for personal calls provided the student has obtained a proper hall pass for that specific purpose. Students will not be excused from classes for phone calls unless it is an urgent matter.

**Are lockers made available for students' use?**

Each student is issued a locker to hold belongings during the school day. Only the student assigned to the locker is permitted to enter it. Students are encouraged to use padlocks on their lockers. Students may bring their own locks or rent a lock from the school. No laser locks are permitted. Rental on a lock is \$5.00, which will be refunded when the lock is returned in the original condition at the end of the school year. If you provide your own lock, duplicate keys/combo copies must be deposited in the main office. Students are responsible for locks, lockers and all contents within the lockers. If a student is unable to enter his/her locker because of a lost or forgotten key or combination and a copy has not been deposited, then the lock will be destroyed to gain entrance. Parents are encouraged to choose a lock that is not easy to pick or break. Entrance into a locker other than the one assigned to you is a disciplinary offense. Lockers are school property. School authorities may search a student's locker and confiscate any property or illegal materials. Such materials may be used as evidence against the student in disciplinary, juvenile, or criminal proceedings. Lockers may be checked for cleanliness at any time. Lockers are to be kept clean, orderly, and free of pictures/writing that is obscene, derogatory (toward students/staff ) or disruptive. Lockers that are damaged will be repaired at the student's expense or the expense of the person or persons caught causing damage. Students are reminded that personal valuables should not be kept in lockers. The school will not be responsible for theft of valuables from lockers.

**Are gym lockers available to students during gym class?**

Lockers and locker rooms will not be utilized this school year for social distancing purposes.

**What items are not permitted in school?**

Items that are not permitted in school because they provide an opportunity for theft/distraction include sums of money in excess of that needed for school, video and audio devices, recorders, cameras, laser lights, video games, yo-yos, water guns, scented creams, colognes, perfumes, etc. Those items, if brought to school for a school purpose, should be deposited in the office for safe keeping. Use of audio devices, etc. to disrupt a class will be treated as a Level II disciplinary offense and the object will be confiscated. Outside food or drink items (with exception of packed lunches/water bottles) should not be brought into school.

**What if I lose or find something?**

Students who find articles must take them to the lost and found which is located in the cafeteria. Lost articles can be claimed in the cafeteria. Lost articles which are not claimed within one month will be given to charitable organizations.

**Are visitors allowed in the middle school?**

Students are not permitted to bring visitors to school. Parents are always welcome, but are encouraged to make an appointment. This year in particular, we are limiting guests to comply with health and safety guidelines. All visitors will sign in using the Raptor system upon arriving.

**How do I report a change of address?**

If a student and their family move to a different location in our district, the student/parent must report the change of address and telephone number to the district registrar's office (724-458-6733). If your telephone number is unlisted, please inform the office and it will be held confidentially.

**What is a hall pass?**

A hall pass represents permission from your teacher or GCMS staff to leave one room and go to another in the building. You must always complete a digital hall pass prior to reporting to an alternate location.

**Am I assigned a homeroom and what is its purpose?**

A homeroom is assigned to all students for the purpose of distributing report cards, important information to families of our students, and getting organized for various school wide activities, etc. Assignments to homerooms are made alphabetically by grade level.

**Are daily announcements made to students?**

Daily announcements are made at the beginning of each morning. Information regarding daily and weekly activities in our school is given. It is extremely important that all students are attentive to the announcements.

**Am I permitted to wear jewelry in gym class?**

The physical education department believes that jewelry can cause injury to the individual/other students during the class. We expect students to leave their jewelry in the locker room during class. A safe place is provided in both locker rooms for those students choosing to secure their valuables. Students who do wear jewelry to class must remove it, and place it on the table in the gym.

**If I left my books in school is there any place I can find a copy?**

Yes, a copy of all middle school textbooks can be found in the reference section of the Grove City Public Library. The books can be used in the Library, but not checked out overnight.

**Are students allowed to carry backpacks to school?**

Students are encouraged to carry backpacks to and from school. They are not, however, permitted to be carried from class to class. Backpacks must be kept in lockers during the school day. Students will be encouraged to stop at lockers frequently throughout the day to drop-off/pick-up necessary items.

**Am I permitted to chew gum in school?**

No, chewing gum is not permitted in school. If gum chewing occurs disciplinary action may be taken.

**Are cell phones permitted in school by students?**

Please refer to the [Electronic Devices policy](#). Students are not to use any personal electronic devices during the day, except for the time allotted during the last five minutes of the lunch period under the direction of the supervising staff.

For the purpose of these guidelines, electronic devices refer to all devices not used for educational purposes. These include, but are not limited to, cell phones, smartwatches, headphones, and earbuds.

**General Guidelines and Procedures**

- Students are encouraged to leave electronic devices at home or in their lockers and not bring them into classrooms.
- As students enter their classrooms, they will be required to silence their phones and place them in a cell phone caddy located in each teacher's classroom. Students are not to retrieve their phones from the caddy until the bell dismisses them from class.
- Cell phones are to remain in the caddy during restroom use, accessing the school nurse, guidance, and school offices.
- Smartwatches, earbuds, and headphones are not to be worn in the classroom and need to be stored in backpacks.
- Students are not permitted to access their phones in the hallways between classes or during lunch. Under the direction of staff supervising the cafeteria, students may access their phones in the last five minutes of the lunch period.

- Other than the designated lunch time access, students are prohibited from accessing their phones until the end of the day dismissal.

### **Exceptions and Special Circumstances**

- Exceptions may be made for students who need cell phones for medical reasons or other specific educational purposes, with prior approval from the school nurse and/or school administration.
- For educational purposes, teachers may allow the use of cell phones for specific classroom activities. In such cases, guidelines for appropriate use will be provided.

### **Enforcement and Violations**

- **First Violation:** The cell phone will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day. A documented verbal warning will be given.
- **Second Violation:** The cell phone will be confiscated and returned to a parent or guardian.
- **Third Violation:** The cell phone will be confiscated and returned to a parent or guardian. The student will receive detention or other appropriate disciplinary action.
- **Insubordination:** Students that refuse to comply with their phone being confiscated will be deemed as insubordinate and will lose cell phone privileges as well as receive additional appropriate disciplinary action.

### **Confiscation Procedure**

Confiscated phones will be labeled with the student's name and securely stored in the school office until they are returned.

### **Communication of Electronic Devices/Cell Phone Guidelines and Procedures**

- **To Students:** These guidelines and procedures will be explained to students at the beginning of the school year.
- **To Parents/Guardians:** These guidelines and procedures will be included in the student handbook and communicated through ParentSquare and Open House.
- **To Staff:** Teachers and staff will receive training on the policy during in-service sessions and will be responsible for enforcing the guidelines consistently.

### **Review and Monitoring**

- **Annual Review:** The guidelines and procedures will be reviewed annually by the school administration and the Cell Phone Committee to ensure their effectiveness and relevance.
- **Educational Resources:** Information on digital citizenship and responsible cell phone use will be provided to students on an ongoing basis.
- **Support for Exceptions:** The school will work with families to accommodate any special needs or circumstances that require deviation from the general guidelines.

By following these guidelines and procedures, Grove City Middle School can maintain a productive educational environment while addressing the needs and safety of all students.

# ATTENDANCE

## **What does Pennsylvania School Code consider to be excused absences?**

All children between the ages of eight and seventeen must be enrolled in school and attend school regularly. The only absences that are excused absences by the Pennsylvania School Code are as follows:

- Student Illness
- Death in the Immediate Family
- Impassable Roads
- Farm and Domestic Service
- Quarantine
- Student Urgency

Pennsylvania state law requires a physician's excuse for all absences due to illness after 10 days of absence. Standard letters are mailed to keep parents informed. After 3 days a reminder letter is sent, after 6 days a warning letter is sent, and after 9 days a letter of notification is sent.

## **Is a written excuse required and how long do I have to turn an excuse in?**

Parents will be notified through ParentSquare in the event of a student absence, and are encouraged to respond to the Absence Note via ParentSquare to submit an excuse electronically in lieu of sending in a paper note. A written excuse from parent/guardian/physician is required for all days a student is not in school. Excuses must be turned in to the office on the student's day of return to school. Students have three days to bring in an excuse or the absence will be marked illegal.

## **What are considered unlawful or unexcused absences?**

Employment, truancy, parental neglect, oversleeping, missing the bus, shopping, babysitting, visiting relatives, hunting, fishing, working at home or remaining at home to do school work are some examples of unexcused absences. All unexcused absences are also unlawful or illegal absences for students under age 17. After three days of such absences, the student's parents will receive a legal notice from the school. The school district is required to file charges with the District Justice at the next occurrence after serving the legal notice.

## **Is educational travel permitted?**

Students may be granted an excused absence for pre-approved educational travel other than the first and last two calendar weeks of school. Students will only be permitted to travel a maximum of two weeks per school year. Forms for pre-approval are available in the principal's office.

## **What is the state truancy law?**

Act 29, the new state truancy law, extensively changed the penalties for truancy from school. Under the new law parents are fined up to \$300 a day and are required to pay court costs or complete a parenting education program or perform community services. The District Justice can also fine students or assign them to an adjudicated alternative program. Student driving privileges can be revoked and applications for a learner's permit can be prohibited for a period of time.

## **Am I permitted an early dismissal?**

No pupils may be excused from school hours for reasons other than an appointment with a doctor (medical, dental-written excuse needed) or a sudden family emergency. Elementary and middle school children dismissed early will be released only to a parent/guardian or to an adult authorized by the parent/guardian. Identification will be required. Student early dismissal requests are to be taken to the office prior to first period. Early dismissal requests will be verified by the office staff. Students must sign out and sign back in upon their return. Forms not returned may result in disciplinary action.

**What if I am late to school?**

Late to school is defined as a partial day of absence. If you arrive at school:

- Before 9:30 a.m. = .2 day
- After 9:30 a.m., but before 11:30 a.m. = .5 day
- After 1:00 p.m. = full day

**If I am going to be absent should my parents call the school?**

Yes. We do encourage parents to call the school in the morning to report your absence.

**What happens if I am tardy to school/class?**

When students accumulate three tardies within the same semester to school, class, or lunch, they will be assigned one hour after school detention. When students accumulate an additional three tardies within the same semester to school, class, or lunch, they will be assigned two hours after school detention. When students accumulate an additional three tardies within the same semester to school, class, or lunch, they will be assigned an ALC.

**What if school is closed or delayed for any reason?**

When school must be closed or be opened later than usual because of weather conditions or emergencies, an announcement to this effect will be made first via [ParentSquare](#). Parents will receive a call/text to the phone number provided. Information will also be available on the following stations:

TV:

- Channel 2 - KDKA Pittsburgh
- Channel 4 - WTAE Pittsburgh
- Channel 11 - WPXI Pittsburgh
- Channel 21 - WFMJ Youngstown
- Channel 27 - WKBN Youngstown

# Academic Programs

## Objectives

The Grove City Middle School Program of Studies is designed so that students can accomplish the goals listed below:

- Skills in communications and computation.
- An appreciation of our heritage and democratic principles.
- A respect and appreciation for the rights of others.
- An ability to practice critical thinking.
- Effective work habits and self-discipline.
- Social competency.
- An ethical behavior based on laws and rules of conduct.
- Intellectual curiosity and eagerness for life-long learning.
- Aesthetic appreciation and self-expression.
- Physical and mental health.
- A wise use of leisure time.
- An understanding of the physical world and man's reaction to it.
- An awareness of relationships with the world community.
- A useful set of work habits.
- Cooperation with others for common goals.

## Curriculum

The curriculum at the middle school level is designed for each student according to school board directives. It is a combination of state regulations and local regulations (as recommended by the faculty to the Superintendent and Board of Directors).

The curriculum is also enhanced by thematic instruction as well as clubs. Clubs are an integral part of the school day. The extra-curricular programs include football, basketball, track, volleyball, wrestling, and cross country.

The middle school curriculum rules and regulations are designed to facilitate the transition from elementary school to high school.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education, has mandated the following curriculum regulations of middle level education:

### 5.212 Middle Level Education

- (a) The middle level program ordinarily serves children who are approximately 11 - 14 years of age. School districts may modify the grouping of young adolescents based upon student needs identified in their strategic plans under 5.203 (relating to strategic plans).
- (b) Curriculum and instruction in the middle level program shall focus on mastery of academic subjects, the development of critical and creative thinking, information literacy, a healthful lifestyle and encourage active participation in the school and community.
- (c) Planned courses that provide instruction in the following areas shall be taught to every student in the middle level program. These planned courses may be taught as separate planned courses or may be integrated with other appropriate planned courses:
  - (1) Language arts, integrating reading, composition, listening, speech, literature and grammar.
  - (2) Mathematics, including mathematical reasoning, algebra and problem-solving.
  - (3) Science, which involves active learning experiences and which may include laboratory experiments and, if appropriate, information about agriculture and agricultural science.
  - (4) Social studies, including history of the United States and Pennsylvania, world history, multi cultural studies, geography, civics and economics.

- (5) Environmental education, including scientific, social, political and economic aspects of ecology.
  - (6) Information skills, including access to traditional and electronic information sources, computer use and research.
  - (7) Wellness and fitness, incorporating physical education, aerobic fitness, regular physical activity and health and instruction every year about prevention of alcohol, chemical and tobacco abuse.
  - (8) The arts, including art, music, dance and theater.
  - (9) Career education, including exposure to various career options and the educational preparation necessary to achieve those options.
  - (10) Technology education, emphasizing practical application of academic skills and problem- solving experience facilitated by technology.
  - (11) Home economics, including human development, interpersonal relationships and preparation for adult roles in families and communities.
  - (12) Study skills.
- (d) This section does not preclude the teaching of other planned courses designed to achieve a school district's student learning outcomes.
- (e) School districts shall determine the most appropriate way to operate their middle level programs to achieve the purpose under subsection (b) and the student learning outcomes in their strategic plans under 5.203.

### **Marking System:**

Grove City Middle School utilizes a percent marking system to indicate level of achievement. An incomplete mark is a temporary mark. Marks issued are based upon percentage calculations determined by the teacher according to the following:

100% - 91% = A;

90% - 81% = B;

80% - 71% = C;

70% - 61% = D;

60% - 0% = F

60% - 51% = Student Conference

50% - 0% = Referral to Counselor

Incomplete Marks (See Make-Up Work Policy)

**Report Cards** will be issued four times per year digitally through [Infinite Campus](#).

**High Honor Roll** is achieved by having a grade point average of 85.5% or higher and no grade lower than an 81%.

**Honor Roll** is achieved by having a grade point average of 80.5% or higher and no grade lower than a 71%.

**Grade Netting** is for students who perform well below the passing mark. If any student scores below a 55% in the first two marking periods, this student's grade will be netted to a 55% in one out of the two first marking periods. This provides the student with an opportunity to pull up their grade. To prepare our students for the rigor at the high school level, grade netting will not be utilized for our 8th grade students.

### **Make-up Policy**

Unexcused Absences - A zero percent (0%) mark is awarded for all work missed.

One Day Absences - Students who are absent for one day are required to submit all work due (on the day of absence) the day they return to school. Any tests missed are to be completed on the day of return. (Tests not completed will be marked as a zero (0%)). Work not submitted on the day of return or by deadline is considered work not submitted on time and subject to the procedures for such.

Multiple Days of Absence - Students have the same number of days of absence to submit assignments (one day for each day of absence for make-up). A penalty (10%) is deducted for each day the assignments are submitted late. Three days after the end of the grade period, a zero (0%) is issued.

Tests and Quizzes - Students do not have the option of taking tests, quizzes, etc. All students present must complete the test, quiz, etc. or receive a zero percent (0%) mark for the test.

Pre-announced Assignments, Projects - All work that becomes due during an absence is required to be submitted on the day of return to school. Work not submitted on the day of return is considered work not submitted on time and is subject to the procedures for such.

Incomplete Marks - Incomplete marks are temporary marks. They are utilized only when it is necessary to assign a mark during the time make-up work is due. All incomplete grades are averaged by the computer in determining grade point averages as zero percent (0%). No credit is granted for incomplete marks. Teachers are not required to accept failing/substandard make-up work. Work submitted by students is expected to be consistent with their normal effort and ability.

Appeals may be made to the principal.

### **Cheating and Plagiarism**

Cheating and plagiarism in any form involving curricular and extra-curricular activities is strictly prohibited. Giving or receiving information during an examination, disclosing examination items to other students, providing completed assignments (or parts of assignments) for other students/doing assignments for other students is considered cheating. A teacher will assign a "0" for any of the above situations. Copying the work or using the ideas of others without giving reference to the source is considered plagiarism. Any student guilty of plagiarism will receive a "0" for the nine weeks. You will be given an opportunity to re-do the assignment in order to receive half-credit for just that assignment and save your nine weeks grade. The guidance counselor and the principal will be notified in all cases of cheating. Parents will then also be informed.

### **Plagiarism: What It Is and How to Recognize and Avoid It**

#### **What is plagiarism and why is it important to understand it?**

We are continually engaged with other people's ideas: we read them in texts, hear them in lecture, discuss them in class, and incorporate them into our own writing. As a result, it is very important that we give credit where it is due. Plagiarism is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information.

#### **How can students avoid plagiarism?**

To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use:

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory;
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings—any pieces of information—that are not common knowledge;
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words; or
- paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.

#### **How to recognize unacceptable and acceptable paraphrases**

Here's the ORIGINAL text, from page 1 of *Lizzie Borden: A Case Book of Family Crime* in the 1890's by Joyce Williams et al.: The rise of industry, the growth of cities, and the expansion of the population were the three great developments of late nineteenth century American history. As new, larger, steam powered factories became a feature of the American landscape in the East, they transformed farm hands into industrial laborers, and provided jobs for a rising tide of immigrants. With industry came urbanization and the growth of large cities (like Fall River, Massachusetts, where the Bordens lived) which became the centers of production as well as of commerce and trade.

**Here's an UNACCEPTABLE paraphrase that is plagiarism:**

The increase of industry, the growth of cities, and the explosion of the population were three large factors in nineteenth century America. As steam-driven companies became more visible in the eastern part of the country, they changed farm hands into factory workers and provided jobs for the large wave of immigrants. With industry came the growth of large cities like Fall River where the Bordens lived which turned into centers of commerce and trade as well as production.

**What makes this passage plagiarism?**

The preceding passage is considered plagiarism for two reasons:

1. The writer has only changed around a few words and phrases, or changed the order of the original's sentences.
2. The writer has failed to cite a source for any of the ideas or facts.

**If you do either or both of these things, you are plagiarizing. Here's an ACCEPTABLE paraphrase:**

Fall River, where the Borden family lives, was typical of northeastern industrial cities of the nineteenth century.

Steam-powered production had shifted labor from agriculture to manufacturing, and as immigrants arrived in the US, they found work in these new factories. As a result, populations grew, and large urban areas arose. Fall River was one of these manufacturing and commercial centers. (Williams 1).

**Why is this passage acceptable?**

This is acceptable paraphrasing because the writer:

1. Accurately relays the information in the original using her own words.
2. Lets her reader know the source of her information.

**Study Practices**

Inability to study effectively has been found to be one primary reason for lack of scholastic success. The following are some general principles recommended as a guide to insure effective study:

**Time.** An adequate amount of time must be provided for the study of each lesson. The planning and budgeting of your time for each essential task will promote the efficient use of available time.

**Place.** For best results from study, you should have a regular place for study, free from all unnecessary distractions.

**Recall.** The practice of attempting, at the end of sections or paragraphs, the recall of the main points presented is an aid to the mastery of content. It is a good practice, also, to summarize in your own words.

**Set.** Concentration is encouraged by the following procedures: a prompt and determined start with the purpose of the assignment clearly in mind, a quick preliminary survey of the chapter by skimming or by glancing over the division headings and reading the summary at the end of the chapter. Having in mind at the start what the chapter is about helps the reader to select the most essential points.

**Organization.** The ideas obtained from reading should be related and organized. This may be prompted by outlining. Meaningful associations with previous experiences are helpful both to comprehension and to retention. Their number may be increased by thinking of original illustrations, by relating the new material to previous study, by using what has been learned in other courses (to verify or evaluate the statements of the author), by making comparisons, and by thinking of possible practical applications of the principles presented in the text.

**Dictionary.** When new words are encountered, if their meaning is not clear from the context, the dictionary should be used.

**Application.** Best results call for the application of wholehearted effort to the task at hand. The length

of period during which full effort may be sustained will vary with the nature of the subject matter. The value of efficient or interspersed test periods has been amply demonstrated.

**Cramming.** One cannot accomplish in a few hours of intense and continuous effort what should have been spread over several weeks. Cramming is not an efficient method of study.

**Review.** For retention, reviews are usually necessary, but reviews also have value for comprehension. Frequently, a second reading brings to light points missed in the first. In the light of the thought of the whole chapter, as grasped in the first reading, new meanings may be found or more accurate interpretations may be given to various paragraphs.

**Notes.** The taking of notes is a good practice when it serves to select the most important points and when the notes are used for making a quick review of these points. Note-taking on a lecture or on a reading should be selective.

# Student Services

## Transportation Services

Bus transportation to and from school is considered a privilege. For the sake of safety, you can understand the need for proper behavior on the school bus. The bus driver acts in the capacity of the parent or the teacher while the students are on their way to or from school. Discipline problems are referred to the transportation supervisor and principal by the bus driver, and students who misbehave may lose the privilege of riding to/from school. If a student loses this privilege it is the responsibility of the parent to transport the student to and from school. The following are procedures to be followed by students who ride school buses:

- If you arrive before 8:02 a.m., please report directly to bus hall and be seated. If you arrive after 8:02 a.m., you may go to your locker and classroom. Students are not permitted to leave the bus to go anywhere but the school building. Failure to comply with this will result in detention/suspension.
- Rules of conduct that govern students in school are also in effect for bus students.
- Students are not permitted to ride another bus unless there is an emergency. Permission must be given by the Transportation Office.

Parents who have questions relative to transportation should contact Krise Transportation, 724-264-8620.

## School Counseling Services

Guidance services are available for every student in the school. These services include assistance with educational planning, interpretation of test scores, occupational information, career information, study skills, help with home, school or social concerns, or any other concerns the student would like to discuss with the counselor. Students desiring to visit a counselor should contact the office to arrange an appointment. Parents may make appointments for a conference by telephoning the office.

We administer the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment Tests. Students and parents are notified well in advance of testing dates. If you have any questions, please call the office.

Students are encouraged to seek extra help from teachers if they do not understand an assignment. If the work is difficult or if you have been absent and have missed assignments/class discussions, arrange a conference with your teachers at a time convenient for both of you. A teacher will sometimes request a student to stay after school if it is apparent that the student is having difficulty with work. This is not to be thought of as a punishment, but rather as a desire of the teacher to help you make the progress of which you are capable. You should be notified in advance so you can inform your parents.

Grove City Middle School will notify families via Parent Square of any after school tutoring or support opportunities that may be made available throughout the school year.

## Student Assistance Program

Students with serious personal/social problems or serious academic difficulties are encouraged to seek the help of the Student Assistance Team. Any student who feels that another student may need help should discuss this situation with the guidance counselor. All discussions are kept strictly confidential. The purpose of the team is to assist students through an in-depth case study approach, using in-house resources or referring to outside agencies. The SAP team has a close working relationship with the Mercer County Behavioral Health Association and other counseling agencies.

### **Student Assistance Program/continued**

SAP consists of three teachers, the guidance counselor, the school nurse, the school psychologist, the principal and a representative from Mercer Mental Health Association. The teachers who have been trained to serve as a team member are identified by posters in their classrooms.

### **Psychological Services**

The services of a school psychologist are available to all students within the district. These services may be requested by a teacher, guidance counselor, principal or parent. Parent approval is necessary for psychological testing and follow-up. A conference is scheduled to discuss test results and recommendations with the parents, teacher, psychologist and other interested staff members.

### **Nursing Services**

When a student is ill or hurt, the student must report to the nurse. The nurse will administer basic first aid and decide if the injury/illness requires more attention. The nurse then has the option to call the parent or guardian for guidance. The nurse is not permitted to authorize medical treatment without parental consent. The nurse is not authorized to treat injuries or illnesses which occur at home. For the safety and well being of all students, the nurse should be made aware of all health problems so that follow-ups at school can be made as needed.

Students who need to take prescription medication during the school day need to have their parent and doctor complete a Medication Order Form provided by the school and return it before any medication can be dispensed. The school will not dispense medication of any kind without parental permission.

If students must take medication during the school day, he/she must leave this medicine in the office or health room. No medication will be issued to students unless it is brought from home with a note from parents or guardians, except Tylenol or ibuprofen (see below). A note from parents is required to explain the need for the medication. According to state law, all medication must be in the original container. All medicine not left in the office will be considered an illegal drug and, therefore, a violation of the school's drug policy and dealt with accordingly. Medicine not used will be returned to the parent upon request from the parent. Parents have the opportunity to grant permission for Tylenol or ibuprofen in the annual forms in Infinite Campus.

The following immunizations are required for all students who are entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Diphtheria and Tetanus – three or more properly spaced doses and a booster is recommended if 5+ years have passed since last vaccination.
- Polio – three or more properly spaced doses of Oral Polio Vaccine.
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella – two doses preferably as MMR II.
- Hepatitis B – three properly spaced doses.
- Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine – one dose or history of disease.
- A Tuberculin test is optional for students of GCASD at this time.

The following Health Screening Program is required by Pennsylvania School Law. The screening program is used to identify children who may need further medical or dental attention. This cannot replace the need for periodic examinations by the family physician, dentist and eye care specialist. The screening program includes:

- A vision test every year for every child.
- The weighing and measuring of every child, every year, from kindergarten through grade twelve.
- A hearing test for every child in kindergarten, and grades 1,2,3,7 and 11.
- Scoliosis for grades 6 and 7.

If at any time a parent feels the need to have a child retested, parents may request it of the school nurse.

## **Cafeteria Services**

The school cafeteria is maintained as a vital part of the health program of the school. A student may bring lunch from home. We offer a well-balanced breakfast/lunch in the cafeteria for a reasonable price. Breakfast is offered for free to all students for the 2025-2026 school year. Breakfast is served from 7:45 am until 8:05 am daily. Lunch prices will be \$3.75 for a premium lunch meal and \$3.25 for a regular lunch meal. Ice cream, snacks, and alternative meal choices are offered on a daily basis.

Grove City Area Schools have adopted a computerized Point of Sale payment system for all school meals purchased in the district. Every student will have their own personal lunchroom account based on their current student ID number. We urge you to take full advantage of the system by placing money into your child's account on a weekly, monthly or annual basis. All money will be handled through the cafeteria; checks should be made out to GCASD, Cafeteria Account. Any money not spent by the end of the school year will be available for your child's use the following school year. Parents can access their child's accounts to verify purchases by calling the Food Service Office at 724-458-7704.

Food deliveries are not accepted. If parents bring lunch for their child, it is to be taken to the main office and it will be routed to the student. Consumption of food outside of the cafeteria or designated area is not permitted.

Guidelines and applications for free and reduced lunches are available in the cafeteria/office. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 202-9410 or call (202-720-5964 voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

The lunchroom supervisors and your fellow students will appreciate your cooperation in:

- Depositing all lunch litter in wastebaskets.
- Returning all trays and utensils to the dishwashing area.
- Leaving the table and floor around your place in a clean condition for others.
- Pushing all chairs under the tables.

Parents may be contacted if students are not eating lunch.

### **Lunchroom Rules:**

- Circulation among tables except to obtain lunch or return trays is prohibited.
- All classroom rules apply to the cafeteria.
- All tables and areas around the tables must be cleared and free of spilled food prior to dismissal.
- All chairs are to be pushed under the table prior to leaving.
- Leaving the cafeteria, except for restroom privileges or medical reasons is refused.

## **Library Media Services**

Students are encouraged to use the LMC for research and recreational reading. Please refer to the [Destiny Discover Homepage](#) to access the catalog and online resources. More information about LMC is available on the district website.

Students take part in a library orientation in the 6th grade English class and, of course, many classes utilize the LMC resources throughout the year. Reading classes are scheduled to visit the library approximately every two weeks, this is the primary time for students to borrow items. Students may also visit during period 5, when the library is open.

Students are responsible for all materials borrowed. They must be returned on time (2 week borrowing period plus a grace period) or a fine of \$0.05 per day is assessed. Students are responsible to pay for any damaged or lost LMC materials.

**Pupil Insurance Service**

Pupil accident insurance plans are available to students at the beginning of each school year. Enrollment in these plans is voluntary. However, students engaging in any program of interscholastic athletics or inter-school sports in Grove City Area Schools are requested to enroll in accident insurance. Parents who do not wish to purchase school insurance must provide proof of insurance that will cover a child while participating in the GCASD athletic programs.

# Code of Conduct

## Student Rights

All students have rights granted by law. All school-age students are entitled to a free education in Pennsylvania.

**Freedom of Expression:** Students have the responsibility to avoid the following when expressing themselves: use of obscenities, ridiculing others, damaging one's reputation, causing disruption to the school process.

**Searches:** School administration may authorize the search of a student, a student's locker, or other belongings if there is a reasonable suspicion that there is a possible threat to the health, welfare and/or safety of a member of the school community. Student lockers are school property and remain at all times under the control of the school. Any item disclosed by a search can be used for disciplinary action and may be turned over to law enforcement officials.

**Due Process Procedures for Exclusion of Students:** The Principal may suspend a student out of school for up to three (3) days without a hearing. The Principal is required to establish the facts and allow the student to respond to the charges, and notify parents. A full suspension of up to ten (10) days may be issued after an informal hearing has been conducted. Prior to the hearing, the student and parents will receive notice stating the charges.

**Removal from Classes for ALC:** The Principal may place a student in ALC from 1 to 10 days without an informal hearing. Student and parents will receive notice of the charges and suspension.

## Student Responsibilities

- Be aware of and follow rules and regulations of the school and community.
- Be willing to volunteer information and cooperate in disciplinary situations.
- Dress to meet acceptable standards of health, safety, and decency.
- Assist the school staff in maintaining a safe school.
- Know and obey all state and local laws.
- Take care of school property.
- Attend school daily except when excused.
- Arrive to school on time and be on time for all classes and other school functions.
- Make up all work missed when absent.
- Avoid obscene statements, gestures, and language.

# Levels of Misconduct

## Level 1

\*Student infractions that impede orderly operations of the classroom or school.

### **Examples, but not limited to:**

Excessive tardies, Class disruption, Failure to follow directions, Running in halls, Hall pass violation, Loitering, Dress code violation, Electronic device violation, Unauthorized food/drink, Bus misconduct, Violation of cafeteria guidelines

### **Examples of Level 1 Disciplinary Options:**

Verbal and/or written reprimand, Denial of privileges, Phone call to parent, Lunch detention, confiscation

## Level 2

\*Student infractions which, based on frequency or seriousness, tend to disrupt the learning climate of the school. These infractions require administrative intervention because Level 1 interventions have been unsuccessful.

### **Examples, but not limited to:**

Continuation of or extreme Level 1 misconduct, Insubordination/defiance, Verbal harassment, Bullying, Plagiarism/cheating, Excessive tardies/absences, Obscene language/writing/gestures, Cutting class, Unsafe behaviors/horseplay

### **Examples of Level 2 Disciplinary Options:**

Office referral, Lunch detention, Denial of privileges/activities, No credit for assignment, ALC, Out of school suspension, Confiscation

## Level 3

\*Infractions that disrupt the learning environment and/or acts directed against persons or properties and whose consequences could endanger the health or safety of others in the school.

### **Examples, but not limited to:**

Continuation of or extreme Level 2 misconduct, Minor theft, Destruction of property, Tobacco violation, Ethnic slurs/intimidation, Bullying, Fighting, Sexual harassment

### **Examples of Level 3 Disciplinary Options:**

Confiscation, Denial of privileges/activities, ALC, Out of school suspension, Restitution, Referral to police or District Magistrate

## Level 4

\*These infractions directed against persons or property could pose a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of others. Such infractions could result in the immediate removal from school and possible intervention of law enforcement.

### **Examples, but not limited to:**

Continuation of or extreme Level 3 misconduct, Major theft, Drug policy violation, Weapons policy violation, Terroristic threats or acts, Bomb threats, Bullying

### **Examples of Disciplinary Options:**

Confiscation, ALC, Out of school suspension, Restitution, Expulsion, Referral to outside agency, Referral to police or District Magistrate.

# Discipline

Out-of-school suspension may be assigned from one to ten days in extreme cases or when other actions fail. The students must be accompanied by a parent or guardian in order to return to school under the following instances:

- Suspension for the second time for the same offense.
- Suspension for more than 3 days.

Any student owing a detention at the end of the school year will have to come in over the summer and serve four hours with the principal.

## **ALC:**

Students assigned to ALC are assigned for the entire day. Students are to report at the beginning of school and remain for the entire school day. Refusal to serve ALC will result in a minimum three day out-of-school suspension. Students in ALC are ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activity for the remainder of that day and including that evening.

All students are to be silent and to work on regular assignments, make-up work, reading material, assignments by ALC teacher, or other approved activities. Classroom teachers will provide class work to the ALC teacher by the beginning of first period. Students having questions are to raise their hand. Restroom breaks are scheduled in the morning and afternoon. Students can bring their own lunch or they can purchase a lunch from the cafeteria which will be brought to them in the ALC classroom.

Students not fulfilling ALC requirements may be:

- Required to repeat an additional day of ALC.
- Suspended out-of-school until a parent conference is held.
- Assigned to a different location.
- Recommended for other disciplinary action including expulsion from school.

## **Record Keeping:**

Students are to be informed of all infractions that have been noted against them. Parents are notified of all punishments in a timely manner. All disciplinary actions are kept in the principal's office.

## Dress Code

Cleanliness, health, safety, and modesty are the most important factors in choosing clothing to be worn to school. As a student of the Grove City Middle School, you represent the school district and community. The clothing you choose represents you as a part of the community. Safety and health are very important considerations for choosing clothing for school and school activity attendance. Students are urged to dress for the weather conditions. In the event of an emergency, students may have to leave the building during inclement weather. With these things in mind, the following regulations are posted:

- Apparel that reveals or exposes the abdomen, lower back, or sides of the torso is considered inappropriate. Also inappropriate is clothing made of sheer or see-through fabric, clothing which does not cover backs, clothing that exposes cleavage, off-the shoulder apparel, clothing which reveals under garments and deep plunge necklines. Tank tops are not allowed. Any sleeveless top must have two inches of fabric on the shoulder.
- Apparel that contains profanity, ambiguous phrases, sexual innuendo, potentially offensive symbols, and alcohol, drug, or tobacco messages is prohibited.
- Excessively large or extremely tight clothing is not allowed. It is expected that clothing will be clean. Holes in pants or trousers must be below fingertip length and not be frayed as to pose a safety hazard.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses can be no shorter than fingertip length.
- Trousers that reveal underwear, that inhibit leg mobility or that can be readily pulled down or fall down are prohibited. Pants that are so long/wide as to pose a safety hazard are prohibited.
- Footwear must be worn. Footwear should be safe for use in our building. Examples of unsafe footwear are: slippers, dangerously high heeled or high soled shoes.
- Jewelry or other accessories that could be considered dangerous or that could damage furniture are not permitted. Examples include, but are not limited to dog collar chokers, huge hoop earrings, long chains.
- No hats, bandanas, or sunglasses (unless medically necessary) may be worn during school.
- Safety requirements for certain classes may require additional clothing regulations.
- Coats are not to be worn during the school day.
- Emerging fashion trends, which are not cited above, will be evaluated by the administration and a faculty committee.
- All dress code regulations also apply to all school functions, including all dances.

The following actions will be taken if there is a violation of the dress code policy:

**First Offense** - Written warning

**Second Offense** - Written notification and detention

**Third Offense** - Written notification, detention and parental conference with principal

Students will be asked to change their improper clothing immediately.

# Student Activities

## **Athletics**

Grove City Middle School offers the following interscholastic sports: basketball, volleyball, cross country and track, wrestling, and football.

## **Athletic/Co-Curricular Eligibility**

Students must fulfill the requirements of the school as well as those of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) and/or District 10.

Grove City students must keep passing a minimum of four (4) full credit subjects; not be failing more than one course, on a weekly basis, and have a minimum GPA of 2.0. The Administration may revoke the privilege of participating in athletics/co-curricular activity at any time for disciplinary reasons, flagrant misconduct, poor sportsmanship, excessive absenteeism, and/or failure to meet minimum scholastic eligibility standards. External suspensions are considered absences from school and are applied to the eligibility requirement. (See the Athletic Director for questions relating to athletic eligibility information and other athletic policies.)

## **Student Eligibility for Sports**

A student who participates in interscholastic athletics at a school which is a member of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, Inc. (P.I.A.A.) must adhere to the P.I.A.A. rules for student athletes. If students fail to comply with the P.I.A.A. rules, they will lose their eligibility to represent their school in interscholastic athletics. If they participate while ineligible, the school or team will be penalized. It is therefore important for students to be aware of the requirements to which they are subject.

The information contained here highlights and summarizes the major eligibility requirements they must meet in order to participate in interscholastic athletics. It does not list every rule or every detail. Unless otherwise indicated, each requirement applies to grades 7 through 12. The principal of their school is responsible for certifying the eligibility of all students representing the school in interscholastic athletics. If they have any questions concerning their athletic eligibility, either present or future, they should see their school principal, who has a complete copy of all the P.I.A.A. eligibility rules. The principal may also obtain from the appropriate P.I.A.A. District Committee a formal ruling as to the athletic eligibility.

## **Age:**

They may not have reached their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday by June 30 immediately preceding the school year (15<sup>th</sup> birthday where interscholastic competition is limited to grades 7 and 8; 16<sup>th</sup> birthday where limited to grades 7 through 9).

## **Amateur Status and Awards**

To be eligible to participate in a sport, they must be an amateur in the sport. They will have lost their amateur status in a sport for at least a year if:

- They, or their school, or an organization which they represent, or their parent or guardian, receives money or property for or related to their athletic ability, performance, participation or services.
- They accept compensation for teaching, training or coaching in a sport. They may receive normal and customary compensation for acting as an instructor or officiating recreational activities, or for serving as a life-guard at swimming areas.

They may receive awards only from their school, the sponsor of an athletic event, the news media, or a non-profit service organization approved by their school principal. Permissible awards are a sweater, jacket, blazer, blanket, shirt, shorts, jersey, cap, watch, ring, scroll, photograph, medal, plaque, or similar trophy, which must bear appropriate organizational insignia or comparable identification.

**Attendance**

They must be regularly enrolled in their school and in full-time attendance there. They are eligible only at the school at which they are enrolled. If they are absent from school during a semester for a total of 20 or more school days, they will lose their eligibility until they have been in attendance for a total of 45 school days following their 20<sup>th</sup> day of absence.

# Bits and Pieces

## **What kind of special activities are planned for the middle school students?**

Many activities are arranged throughout the school year. An activity that occurs during school hours is considered to be part of the curriculum. The requirement for participation is the same as that for academic work. To be excused, a doctor's excuse or a parent conference prior to the activity is necessary.

Theme weeks have become an integral part of our middle school mission. These special events are always announced in advance and occasionally involve leaving our building for events. All school rules still apply regarding proper conduct.

Mixers and other activities with refreshments, music and games are planned at various times throughout the year as a reward for our students. These are funded from the Spaghetti Dinner. Students may be excluded for disciplinary reasons at the suggestion of the principal/teachers. Mixers are held during the school day.

Assemblies are presented to the students of the middle school as a means of education beyond the classroom. It is also an opportunity to exercise expertise at attending public gatherings and functions. The middle school assemblies are meant to be thoroughly enjoyed by all students. At all times the students' behavior should be refined and courteous. An indication of the cultural level of the school is the conduct of its student body at an assembly. Whether guests are present or not, each student is personally responsible for the impression made by the school as a whole. Unacceptable conduct includes whistling, uncalled-for-clapping, boisterousness, and talking during a program.

## **Financial Matters**

The office will not be able to lend money to students. You are responsible for textbooks that are loaned to you for classroom use. Library fines must be paid in full. Students borrowing books are responsible for returning them. Students will be assessed for lost, damaged, or destroyed books. The average textbook costs over \$50.00 and must be usable for at least six years. Students are required to take care of books and return them without undue damage. Writing in texts (unless instructed to do so) or damage to the cover (other than normal wear) may result in repair or replacement costs.

## **Are students encouraged to participate in school fundraising?**

Students are encouraged to participate in our school fundraising. This encouragement to participate is to assist all families in deferring costs of students participating in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade LEEP program, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade field trip and the middle school yearbook.

The Grove City Area School District has established guidelines for the control and use of such funds. Only authorized persons may expend funds as approved. These funds are subject to state audit. All checks should be made out to GCASD - not the student or club advisor.

## **Are students permitted to sell items from an outside organization in school?**

No, only school fundraising will be permitted.

## **Can I expect emergency drills?**

A fire drill/other evacuation plan is posted in each room. Students should study the plan and become familiar with it. Students are not permitted to talk during an emergency drill. In the event of an emergency, evacuation procedures are in place and will be executed as needed.

When the fire alarm sounds, students will leave the room. Before the last person leaves the room, all

windows and doors are to be closed and lights are to be turned off. No one is to pass another person or break the line. Running is not permitted. The first to reach an outside door is to hold it open until all have left the building.

Students are to remain at least 50 feet from the building until the signal is given to re-enter. No one is to return to the building until the signal is given by the principal or an authorized representative.

In the event of any type of emergency, we encourage parents not to pick up their child. This only adds to the confusion of the situation. We will make every attempt to have your child contact you and let you know that they are okay.

### **Are there bulletin boards and display cases?**

There are several bulletin boards throughout our building. These display student work, announce activities, and recognize students' accomplishments. The staff strives to recognize these accomplishments whenever possible. Students who have something that they would like to display must work through the office.

### **Do we go on field trips?**

An annual trip is taken by the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes to provide cross-curriculum enrichment for each of the subjects.

LEEP (Lutherlyn Environmental Education Program) is a field experience for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade class which has become a part of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. The students will use an outdoor classroom to accomplish many of the state standards for environmental education. Our focus will be on components of habitats including human impact and habitat management. During the educational process, activities will be designed to develop self confidence as well as instill an attitude of trust in others. We believe this program will also develop stronger student/teacher relationships which will lead to greater cooperation in the classroom setting.

### **What clubs are offered at the middle school?**

Grove City Middle School offers:

#### **Student Council**

The student council of GCMS is the student governing body of the school. Representatives are elected by their peers. The purpose of the student council is:

- To develop competent leaders.
- To create confidence in youth toward directing activities and school spirit.
- To administer and direct fundraising.
- To work with the administration, faculty, and parent groups to develop student rights.
- To administer or treasure money to the different clubs within the middle school.

#### **Student Dances**

During the school year student dances are sponsored by the student council. Dances are well chaperoned by faculty and parents.

#### **Newspaper**

A small newspaper staff researches, writes and produces a school newspaper. Newspapers are sold during lunch periods.

#### **Yearbook**

A yearbook staff consisting of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students produce a middle school yearbook. Yearbooks can be paid for through a December fundraiser or at a small cost announced in the spring.

## **Eagle Brigade**

The Eagle Brigade is a team of middle school students who have made the high honor roll at least one time during the first semester. This team of students helps fellow students academically.

## **What do I do if I am not in a club?**

Students not involved in the above clubs will be given a chance to sign up for a club that meets their interests. They will choose from a supplied list which is generated through input from the students.

## **If I am in chorus/band do we participate in any concerts?**

Yes, one in December and one in May.

## **Rules for After School Activities**

After school activities such as dances/pizza parties, mixers, etc. are subject to behavioral requirements that are designed to assure the safety and well being of the participants as well as maintaining the well being of school property and meet

with any and all legal requirements. Most rules and their consequences are obvious as they reflect codes of conduct that apply to schools and the general community. Others may reflect rules that are specific to school activities and may differ from the rules of other types of similar activities that may occur in the community.

Removal from an activity because of an infraction means that the student will be asked to leave the activity. The student should call his/her parents first.

It is recommended that parents provide the student with an alternative place to call if parents are not going to be available during the activity.

It is hoped that these rules and their consequences will not have to be used during the school year. The students at the middle school are being given an opportunity to practice the responsibility that they are going to be using in the future. Our students have traditionally done very well in these activities.

### **Guidelines:**

- You must be in attendance at school the day of the activity in order to participate.
- No drugs/alcohol of any kind are permitted at activities. The consequences of the violation in this area will be automatic removal from the activity, notification of parents, and suspension from future activities. Suspension from school and a referral to the Grove City Area School Board of Education and the police may also occur.
- Tobacco is not permitted to be used or possessed at any school function. Violation of this rule will result in removal from the activity, notification of parents and suspension from school.
- Fighting or horseplay that could, in the judgment of chaperones, lead to injury will result in removal from the activity and possible loss of activity privileges for a specified number of future events. Other action could include implementation of School Board Policy No. 5150.1 (Anti-Violence Policy).
- Vandalism will result in removal from the activity and possible loss of all activity privileges as well as restitution for damages. Severe acts of vandalism may result in police notification.
- Possession of any type of weapon will result in implementation of School Board Policy No. 5150.1 (Anti- Violence Policy).
- Belligerence, rowdiness, use of obscenities and other behavioral disruption will result in removal from the activity and referral to the principal as a Level II disciplinary infraction.

Dress Code corresponding to the school dress code is in effect. Exceptions to this code will be made with advance announcements and will only apply when the activity warrants such exceptions.

## Grove City Middle School Bell Schedule

### GCMS Bell Schedule 2025-2026

Eagle Time:	8:10 - 8:23
Period 1:	8:25 - 9:05
Period 2:	9:07 - 9:47
Period 3:	9:49 - 10:29
Period 4:	10:31 - 11:11
Period 5,5/6:	11:13 - 11:39 / 11:13 - 11:53
Period 6/7,7,7/8:	11:42 - 12:22 / 11:56 - 12:22 / 11:56 -12:36
Period 8/9,9:	12:25 - 1:05 / 12:39 - 1:05
Period 10:	1:08 - 1:48
Period 11:	1:50 - 2:30
Period 12:	2:32 - 3:12

\*Student Day = 8:10 AM - 3:12 PM

\*Teacher Day = 7:45 AM - 3:15 PM

### GCMS Activity/Club Bell Schedule 2025-2026

Eagle Time:	8:10 - 8:22
Period 1:	8:24 - 9:00
Period 2:	9:02 - 9:38
Period 3:	9:40 - 10:16
Period 4:	10:18 - 10:54
Period 5,5/6:	10:56 - 11:21 / 10:56 - 11:32
Period 6/7,7,7/8:	11:24 - 12:00 / 11:35 - 12:00 / 11:35 - 12:11
Period 8/9,9:	12:03 - 12:39 / 12:14 - 12:39
Period 10:	12:41 - 1:17
Period 11:	1:19 - 1:55
Period 12:	1:57 - 2:33
CLUB/ACTIVITY:	2:35 - 3:12

\*Student Day = 8:10 AM - 3:12 PM

\*Teacher Day = 7:45 AM - 3:15 PM

# Weapons Policy

**Book: Policy Manual**  
**Number: 218.1**  
**Last Updated: May 12, 2025**

**Section: 200 Pupils**  
**Status: Active**

**Title: Weapons**  
**Adopted: January 20, 2014**

## Purpose

The Board recognizes the importance of a safe school environment relative to the educational process. Possession of weapons in the school setting is a threat to the safety of students and staff and is prohibited by law.

## Definitions

**Weapon** - the term shall include but is not limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, replica of a weapon and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.[1][2]

**Possession** - a student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student; in the student's locker or assigned storage area; or under the student's control while on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school or while the student is coming to or from school.

## Authority

The Board prohibits students from possessing and bringing weapons and replicas of weapons into any district buildings, onto school property, to any school-sponsored activity and onto any public vehicle providing transportation to or from school or a school-sponsored activity, or while the student is coming to or from school.[2][3]

The Board shall expel for a period of not less than one (1) year any student who violates this weapons policy. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law and Board policy.[2][4][5]

The Superintendent may recommend modifications of such expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.[2]

In the case of a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, the district shall take all steps required to comply with state and federal laws and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with law enforcement and Board policies.[2][4][6][7][8][9][10][11]

## Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall react promptly to information and knowledge concerning possession of a weapon. Such action shall be in compliance with state law and regulations and with the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school's property, and the district's emergency preparedness plan.[11][12][13]

When the behavior of a student in possession of a weapon indicates a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community or others, district staff shall report the student to the threat assessment team, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.[14][15]

## Guidelines

The Superintendent or designee shall immediately report incidents involving weapons on school property, at any school-sponsored activity or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity to the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in

accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with law enforcement and Board policies.[2][11][12][16][17][18]

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving weapons as a victim or suspect immediately, as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian whether or not the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian.[11][17][19]

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent shall annually, by July 31, report all incidents involving possession of a weapon to the PA Department of Education on the required form.[11][12][16]

The building principal shall annually inform staff, students and parents/guardians about the Board policy prohibiting weapons and about their personal responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of the school community.

An exception to this policy may be made by the Superintendent, in accordance with law, who shall prescribe special conditions or administrative regulations to be followed.[2]

In accordance with federal law, possession or discharge of a firearm in, on, or within 1,000 feet of school grounds is prohibited. Violations shall be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.[20][21]

### **Transfer Students**

When the district receives a student who transfers from a public or private school during an expulsion period for an offense involving a weapon, the district may assign that student to an alternative assignment or may provide alternative education, provided the assignment does not exceed the expulsion period.[2][22]

# Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy

**Book: Policy Manual**  
**Number: 249**  
**Last Revised: November 9, 2020**

**Section: 200 Pupils**  
**Status: Active**

**Title: Bullying/Cyberbullying**  
**Adopted: January 20, 2014**

## **Purpose**

The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by district students.

## **Definitions**

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:[1]

1. Substantially interfering with a student's education.
2. Creating a threatening environment related to school or school activities.
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

School setting means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.[1]

## **Authority**

The Board prohibits all forms of bullying by district students.[1]

The Board encourages students who believe they or others have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

Students are encouraged to use the district's report form, available from the building principal, or to put the complaint in writing; however, oral complaints shall be accepted and documented. The person accepting the complaint shall handle the report objectively, neutrally and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor the student filing the complaint or those accused of a violation of this policy.

The Board directs that verbal and written complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and appropriate corrective or preventative action be taken when allegations are substantiated. The Board directs that any complaint of bullying brought pursuant to this policy shall also be reviewed for conduct which may not be proven to be bullying under this policy but merits review and possible action under other Board policies.

## **Title IX Sexual Harassment and Other Discrimination**

Every report of alleged bullying that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws against discrimination shall be handled as a joint, concurrent investigation into all allegations and coordinated with the full participation of the Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator. If, in the course of a bullying investigation, potential issues of discrimination are identified, the Title IX Coordinator shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of alleged discrimination as well as the incidents of alleged bullying.[2][3]

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality of all parties, witnesses, the allegations, the filing of a complaint and the investigation shall

be handled in accordance with applicable law, regulations, this policy and the district's legal and investigative obligations.

### **Retaliation**

Reprisal or retaliation relating to reports of bullying or participation in an investigation of allegations of bullying is prohibited and shall be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

Each student shall be responsible to respect the rights of others and to ensure an atmosphere free from bullying.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that this policy and administrative regulations are reviewed annually with students.[1]

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.[1]

District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:[1]

1. Board's Bullying Policy.
2. Report of bullying incidents.
3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.

### **Guidelines**

The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students.[1][4][5]

This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the district website.[1]

### **Education**

The district may develop, implement and evaluate bullying prevention and intervention programs and activities. Programs and activities shall provide district staff and students with appropriate training for effectively responding to, intervening in and reporting incidents of bullying.[1][6][7][8]

### **Consequences for Violations**

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include:[1][4][9]

1. Counseling within the school.
2. Parental conference.
3. Loss of school privileges.
4. Transfer to another school building, classroom, or school bus.
5. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities.
6. Detention.
7. Suspension.
8. Expulsion.
9. Referral to law enforcement officials.

# Controlled Substances/Paraphernalia Policy

**Book: Policy  
Manual  
Number: 227**

**Section: 200 Pupils  
Status: Active**

**Title: Controlled  
Substances/Paraphernalia  
Adopted: January 20, 2014**

**Last Revised: August 12, 2024**

## Purpose

The Board recognizes that the use and abuse of controlled substances as defined in this policy is a serious problem with legal, physical and social implications for the whole school community. The purpose of this policy is to prohibit student possession, use and/or distribution of controlled substances, except as permitted by applicable state or federal law and Board policy.[1][2]

## Definitions

For purposes of this policy, **controlled substances** shall include:[3][4]

1. Any controlled substance prohibited by federal or Pennsylvania laws.
2. Look-alike drugs.
3. Alcoholic beverages.
4. Anabolic steroids.
5. Drug paraphernalia.
6. Any volatile solvents or inhalants, such as but not limited to glue and aerosol products.
7. Substances that when ingested cause a physiological effect that is similar to the effect of a controlled substance as defined by state or federal laws.
8. Prescription or nonprescription (over-the-counter) medications, except those for which permission for use in school has been granted pursuant to Board policy.[1][2]

For purposes of this policy, **under the influence** shall include any consumption or ingestion of controlled substances by a student.

For purposes of this policy, **look-alike drug** shall include any pill, capsule, tablet, powder, plant matter or other item or substance that is designed or intended to resemble a controlled substance prohibited by this policy, or is used in a manner likely to induce others to believe the material is a controlled substance.

## Authority

The Board prohibits students from using, possessing, distributing and being under the influence of any controlled substances during school hours, at any time while on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, and during the time spent traveling to and from school and to and from school-sponsored activities.[5][6][7]

The Board may require participation in drug counseling, rehabilitation, testing or other programs as a condition of reinstatement into the school's educational, extracurricular or athletic programs resulting from violations of this policy.

In the case of a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, the district shall take all steps required to comply with state and federal laws and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with law enforcement and Board policies.[8][9][10][11][12][13]

## Off-Campus Activities

This policy shall also apply to student conduct that occurs off school property or during nonschool hours to the same extent as provided in Board policy on student discipline.[14]

## **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to identify and control substance abuse in the schools which:

1. Establish procedures to appropriately manage situations involving students suspected of using, possessing, being under the influence or distributing controlled substances.[15][16][17]
2. Disseminate to students, parents/guardians and staff the Board policy and administrative regulations governing student use of controlled substances.
3. Provide education concerning the dangers of abusing controlled substances.
4. Establish procedures for education and readmission to school of students convicted of offenses involving controlled substances.

## **Guidelines**

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion and referral for prosecution.[14][18][19]

The Superintendent or designee shall immediately report required incidents and may report discretionary incidents involving the prohibited possession, use or sale of controlled substances on school property, at any school-sponsored activity or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity to the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with law enforcement and Board policies.[13][15][16][20][21][22]

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving the prohibited possession, use or sale of controlled substances as a victim or suspect immediately, as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian whether or not the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian.[13][20][23]

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent shall annually, by July 31, report all incidents of prohibited possession, use or sale of controlled substances to the PA Department of Education on the required form.[13][15][16]

In all cases involving students and controlled substances, the need to protect the school community from undue harm and exposure to drugs shall be recognized.

No student may be admitted to a program that seeks to identify and rehabilitate the potential abuser without the intelligent, voluntary and aware consent of the student and parent/guardian.

## **Anabolic Steroids**

The Board prohibits the use of anabolic steroids by students involved in school-related athletics, except for a valid medical purpose. Body building and muscle enhancement, increasing muscle bulk or strength, or the enhancement of athletic ability are not valid medical purposes. Human Growth Hormone (HGH) shall not be included as an anabolic steroid.[24]

Students shall be made aware of the dangers of steroid use; that anabolic steroids are classified as controlled substances; and that their unauthorized use, possession, purchase or sale could subject students to suspension, expulsion and/or criminal prosecution.[18][25]

## **Reasonable Suspicion/Testing**

If based on the student's behavior, medical symptoms, vital signs or other observable factors, the building principal has reasonable suspicion that the student is under the influence of a controlled substance, the student may be required to submit to drug or alcohol testing. The testing may include but is not limited to the analysis of blood, urine, saliva or the administration of a Breathalyzer test.

# Electronic Devices Policy

**Book: Policy Manual**                      **Section: 200 Pupils**      **Title: Electronic Devices Policy**  
**Number: 237**                      **Status: Active**                      **Adopted: January 20, 2014**  
**Last Revised: January 18, 2023**

## Purpose

The Board adopts this policy in order to support an educational environment that is orderly, safe and secure for district students and employees.

## Definition

**Electronic devices** shall include all devices that can take photographs; record, play or edit audio or video data; store, transmit or receive calls, messages, text, data or images; operate online applications; or provide a wireless, unfiltered connection to the Internet.

## Authority

The Board directs that electronic devices may be used in authorized areas or as determined by the building principal as follows:

1. For educational or instructional purposes, as determined and supervised by the classroom teacher.
2. Before and after school, in the cafeteria at lunchtime, in the hallways during the passing of classes, on the bus or other vehicles if authorized by the driver, and in the library and study hall if authorized by the classroom teacher.
3. When the educational, safety, emergency, medical or security use of the electronic device is approved by the building principal or designee, or the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 team. In such cases, the student's use must be supervised by a classroom teacher or district staff.[1][2]

The Board prohibits use of electronic devices in locker rooms, bathrooms, health suites and other changing areas at any time.

The district shall not be liable for the loss, damage or misuse of any electronic device.

## Electronic Images and Photographs

The Board prohibits the taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing, or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or other means, including but not limited to texting and emailing.

Because such violations may constitute a crime under state and/or federal law, the district may report such conduct to state and/or federal law enforcement agencies.

## Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians and employees about the Board's electronic device policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

## Guidelines

Violations of this policy by a student shall result in disciplinary action and shall result in confiscation of the electronic device.[3][4][5]

# Food Services Policy

**Book: Policy Manual**  
**Number: 808**

**Section: 800 Operations**  
**Status: Active**

**Title: Food Services**  
**Adopted: January**  
**20, 2014**

**Last Revised: January 18,**  
**2023**

## Purpose

The Board recognizes that students require adequate, nourishing food and beverages in order to grow, learn and maintain good health. The Board directs that students shall be provided with adequate space and time to eat meals during the school day.

## Authority

The food service program shall be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, as well as federal guidelines established by the Child Nutrition Division of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).<sup>[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10]</sup>

The district shall ensure that, in the operation of the food service program, no student, staff member or other individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.<sup>[11][12]</sup>

Food sold by the school may be purchased by students and district employees but only for consumption on school premises. The price charged to students shall be established annually by the district in compliance with state and federal laws.<sup>[4][13]</sup>

Nonprogram food shall be priced to generate sufficient revenues to cover the cost of such items. A **nonprogram food** shall be defined as a food or beverage, other than a reimbursable meal or snack, that is sold at the school and is purchased using funds from the child nutrition account. **Nonprogram foods** include but are not limited to adult meals and a-la-carte items. All revenue from the sale of nonprogram food shall accrue to the child nutrition program account.<sup>[13][14]</sup>

## Delegation of Responsibility

Operation and supervision of the food service program shall be the responsibility of the Food Services Director.

The individual responsible for the operation and supervision of the food service program shall present to the Board each month for its approval a statement of receipts and expenditures for cafeteria funds.<sup>[4]</sup>

Cafeterias shall be operated on a nonprofit basis. A periodic review of the cafeteria accounts shall be made by the Business Manager.<sup>[3][4]</sup>

The individual responsible for the operation and supervision of the food service program shall ensure that school meals meet the standards required by the School Breakfast Program, the National School Lunch Program and the Special Milk Program.<sup>[2][3][4][6][7][8][9][10]</sup>

The Superintendent or designee shall comply with state and federal requirements for conducting cafeteria health and safety inspections and ensuring employee participation in appropriate inspection services and training programs.<sup>[15][16][17][18]</sup>

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and disseminate administrative regulations to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify students, parents/guardians and employees concerning the contents of this policy and applicable administrative regulations. Notification shall include information related to nondiscrimination.<sup>[12]</sup>

## **Guidelines**

To reinforce the district's commitment to nutrition and student wellness, foods served in school cafeterias shall:[19]

1. Be carefully selected to contribute to students' nutritional well-being and health.
2. Meet the nutrition standards specified in law and regulations and approved by the Board.
3. Be prepared by methods that will retain nutritive quality, appeal to students and foster lifelong healthy eating habits.
4. Be served in age-appropriate quantities, at reasonable prices.

The district shall use USDA Foods for school menus available under the Child Nutrition USDA Foods Programs.

All funds derived from the operation, maintenance or sponsorship of the food service program shall be deposited in the separate cafeteria fund, in the same manner as other district funds. Such funds shall be expended in the manner approved and directed by the Board, but no amount shall be transferred from the cafeteria fund to any other account or fund; however, district advances to the food service program may be returned to the district's general fund from any surplus resulting from its operation.[4]

Surplus accounts shall be used only for the improvement and maintenance of the cafeteria.[4]

## **Free/Reduced-Price School Meals and Free Milk**

The district shall provide free and reduced-price school meals and/or free milk to students in accordance with the terms and conditions of the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program and the Special Milk Program.[20][21]

The district shall conduct direct certification three (3) times per year using the Pennsylvania Student Eligibility System (PA-SES) to identify students who are eligible for free school meal benefits without the need for submission of a household application. Direct certification shall be conducted:[20][21]

1. At or around the beginning of the school year.
2. Three (3) months after the initial effort.
3. Six (6) months after the initial effort.

The district may also conduct direct certification on a weekly or monthly basis.

## **Accommodating Students With Special Dietary Needs**

The district shall make appropriate food service and/or meal accommodations to students with special dietary needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.[22][23][24][25]

## **School Meal Service and Accounts**

To ensure the effective operation of the district's food service program and delivery of school food program meals to students, the district shall:

1. Assign individual school meal accounts to each student for the purchase of meals served in school cafeterias, which ensure that the identity of each student is protected.
2. Notify parents/guardians when the student's school meal account reaches a low balance.
3. Notify parents/guardians when the student's school meal account reaches a negative balance. The notice shall include information on payment options.
4. Provide a school food program meal to each student who does not have the money to pay for the school food program meal or who has a negative balance in their school meal account, except when the student's parent/guardian has specifically provided written notice to the district to withhold a school food program meal.[3]

When a student owes money for five (5) or more school food program meals, the district shall make at least two (2) attempts to contact the student's parent/guardian and shall provide the application for free/reduced-price

school meal benefits to the parent/guardian to apply for benefits under federal school meal programs. The district shall offer assistance to parents/guardians with applying for free/reduced-price school meal benefits.[3][20][21]

Communications regarding a low balance or money owed by a student for school meals shall be made to the student's parent/guardian.[3]

School staff may communicate a low balance or money owed by a student for school meals to a student in grades 9-12; such communication shall be made to the individual student in a discreet manner.[3]

The district shall be permitted to contact the student's parent/guardian by means of a letter addressed to the parent/guardian that is delivered by the student.[3]

District schools shall be prohibited from:[3]

1. Publicly identifying or stigmatizing a student who cannot pay for a school food program meal or who has a negative school meal account balance. It shall not constitute public identification or stigmatization of a student for a school to restrict privileges and activities of students who owe money for school meals if those same restrictions apply to students who owe money for other school-related purposes.
2. Requiring a student who cannot pay for a school food program meal to perform chores or other work to pay for the meal, unless chores or other work are required of all students regardless of their ability or inability to pay for a school food program meal.
3. Requiring a student or school staff to discard a school food program meal after it was served to the student due to the student's inability to pay for the meal or due to a negative school meal account balance.

This policy and any applicable procedures or administrative regulations regarding school meal charges and school meal accounts shall be communicated annually to school administrators, school food service personnel, other appropriate school staff and contracted food service personnel.

The district shall provide parents/guardians with a written copy of this policy and any applicable procedures or administrative regulations at the start of each school year, when a student enrolls in school after the start of the school year and when a parent/guardian is notified of a negative school meal account balance.

The district shall annually inform parents/guardians, students and staff about the contents of this policy and any applicable procedures via the district website, student handbooks, newsletters, posted notices and/or other efficient communication methods.

### **Collection of Unpaid Meal Charges**

Reasonable efforts shall be made by the district to collect unpaid meal charges from parents/guardians. Efforts taken in the collection shall not have a negative impact on the student involved, but shall focus primarily on the parents/guardians responsible for providing funds for meal purchases.

### **Procurement**

Procurement of goods or services for the food service program shall meet the requirements of applicable law, regulations and Board policy and procedures.[26][27][28]

### **Professional Standards for Food Service Personnel**

The district shall comply with the professional standards for school food service personnel who manage and operate the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. For purposes of this policy, **professional standards** include hiring standards for new food service program directors and annual continuing education/training for all individuals involved in the operation and administration of school meal programs. Such professional standards shall apply to both district-operated food service programs and contracted food service programs.[6][7][18][29]

### **School Food Safety Inspections**

The district shall obtain two (2) safety inspections per year in accordance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations.[16][17][30]

The district shall post the most recent inspection report and release a copy of the report to members of the public, upon request.

**School Food Safety Program**

The district shall comply with federal requirements in developing a food safety program that enables district schools to take systematic action to prevent or minimize the risk of foodborne illness among students.[8][10][16]

The district shall maintain proper sanitation and health standards in food storage, preparation and service, in accordance with applicable state and local laws and regulations and federal food safety requirements.[17][30][31]

# Homeless Students Policy

**Book: Policy  
Manual  
Number: 251**

**Section:200 Pupils  
Status: Active**

**Title : Homeless  
Students  
Adopted: January 20,  
2014**

**Last Revised: March 13, 2017**

## Purpose

The Board recognizes the challenges encountered by students experiencing homelessness, foster care and other educational instability. The Board is committed to facilitating the immediate enrollment; eliminating barriers to the attendance, education and graduation; and providing additional supports in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations and Board policy, for such students.[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8]

## Authority

The Board directs the district to collaborate with school staff, other school districts, local agencies and other entities in supporting the needs of students experiencing educational instability.

The Board shall ensure that students experiencing educational instability have equal access to the same educational programs, activities and services provided to other district students.[1][2][3][4][5][6][7]

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to waive specific requirements in Board policies, procedures and administrative regulations to the extent that they create barriers for the enrollment and attendance of students experiencing educational instability. Such waivers include, but are not limited to, requirements regarding:[1][2][3][4][5][6][7]

1. Dress code.[9]
2. Transportation.[10]
3. School-sponsored or extracurricular activities for which students meet placement and qualification requirements, including, but not limited to, clubs, athletics, performing arts, class trips, social events, career and technical education, internships and specialized classes.[11][12][13][14][15][16][17]
4. Fees related to school-sponsored or extracurricular activity participation fees, and other fees including, but not limited to, school identification (badges, cards, etc.), uniforms, materials, lost or damaged items, athletic physical exams, parking or driving, food services, library, locker or padlock rental or replacement, summer school or credit recovery, technology and graduation regalia.[9][13][14][15][18][19][20][21][22]
5. Graduation.[19]
6. Registration deadlines.

It is the policy of the Board that no student shall be discriminated against, segregated or stigmatized based on their status as a student experiencing educational instability.

## Definitions

Student Experiencing Educational Instability means a student who has experienced one (1) or more changes in school enrollment during a single school year due to any of the following:[4]

1. Homelessness.[1][3][7]

2. An adjudication of:[23][24]

- a. Dependency relating to child protective services and juvenile matters;
- b. Delinquency, if disclosed by the student's parent/guardian; or
- c. As part of court-ordered services under a voluntary placement or custody agreement.

A student experiencing foster care may also qualify as a student experiencing educational instability as defined above, if such circumstances apply.[25]

Enroll or Enrollment means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.[26]

Additional costs means the difference between what the district spends to transport a resident student to the student's assigned school and the cost to transport a child in foster care to the child's school of origin.

Foster care means twenty-four (24) hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions and pre-adoptive homes. A child is in foster care in accordance with this definition regardless of whether the foster care facility is licensed and payments are made by the state, tribal or local agency for the care of the child, whether adoption subsidy payments are being made prior to the finalization of an adoption or whether there is federal matching of any payments that are made.[25]

Homeless children and youths means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:[26]

1. Children and youths who are:
  - a. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;
  - b. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - c. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters; or
  - d. Abandoned in hospitals;
2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above; and
5. School-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other available living accommodations.

School of origin is the school in which the student experiencing educational instability was last enrolled.

- The school of origin for a *homeless child or youth* - the last school in which the homeless child or youth was enrolled when permanently housed or the school in which the homeless child or youth was last enrolled, including preschool.[27]
- The school of origin for a *child in foster care* - the school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care. If a child's foster care placement changes, the school of origin is the school the child is attending immediately prior to each change in placement.[8]
- When the homeless child or youth, or child in foster care, completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin shall become the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

Unaccompanied youth means a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youth who have run away from home; been abandoned or forced out of home by a parent, guardian or other caretaker; or separated from a parent or guardian for any other reason.[26]

### Delegation of Responsibility

The Board designates the Director of Pupil Services to serve as the district's point of contact for students experiencing educational instability.[4][5][27]

The name and contact information of the district's point of contact shall be included in the student's education records and provided to the student's education decision maker.[4]

The district's point of contact shall ensure outreach and coordination with the following, as appropriate to each individual student's needs:[4][5][27]

1. Local children and youth agency to:
  - a. Establish formal mechanisms to ensure that the district is promptly notified when a child enters foster care or changes foster care placements;
  - b. Develop a protocol on how to make best interest determinations; and
  - c. Develop and coordinate transportation procedures.
2. Other local service agencies and entities that provide services to students experiencing educational instability.
3. Other school districts on issues of prompt identification, transfer of records, transportation and other inter-district activities.
4. District staff responsible for the provision of services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.[11][28]
5. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

The district's point of contact, in consultation with the school counselor, school social worker, home and school visitor or school psychologist and the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team or Section 504 Team, shall:[4]

1. Facilitate the student's expedited consultation with the school counselor or other mental health professionals, as appropriate.
2. Facilitate the prompt placement of the student in appropriate courses.
3. Connect the student with educational services that meet the student's specific needs.
4. Immediately request the prior school entity, county agency and the student's education decision maker to provide the complete student information and records, including an IEP or Section 504 service agreement, if applicable. Within ten (10) business days, the prior school entity located within Pennsylvania, including schools with residential placements, shall provide the requested information and records to ensure proper transfer of course credits, grades and an IEP or Section 504 service agreement, if applicable.
5. Develop and execute a graduation plan in collaboration with the student in grades nine (9) through twelve (12). The graduation plan shall be customized to meet the specific needs of the student and shall detail the courses necessary for on-time graduation and transition to postsecondary education or the workforce. The graduation plan shall be included in the student's education records.

### *Additional Responsibilities to Support Homeless Students -*

The district's point of contact shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries and soup kitchens. Such notice shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths.[27]

The district's point of contact shall provide reliable, valid and comprehensive data to the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.[27]

### Training

The district's point of contact shall provide professional development and training to school staff on the

education needs of students experiencing educational instability.

#### *Additional Training to Support Homeless Students -*

The district's point of contact shall participate in professional development programs and other technical assistance activities offered by the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.[27]

The district's point of contact shall arrange professional development programs for school staff, including office staff.[27]

School personnel providing services to homeless children and youths, including school enrollment staff, shall receive professional development and support to:[27]

1. Improve identification of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths;
2. Understand the rights of such children, including requirements for immediate enrollment and transportation; and
3. Heighten the awareness of, and capacity to respond to, the educational needs of such children.

#### Guidelines

Students enrolled in this district experiencing educational instability shall be provided support and services, as appropriate to each individual student's needs, in accordance with Board policy.[4]

Minimal documentation shall be required for a student experiencing educational instability to qualify for supports and services. Information used to determine that a student is experiencing educational instability may be confirmed verbally, in writing or by another manner by shelter providers, outreach workers, case managers, juvenile probation officers and others.

Parents/Guardians and students have the authority to determine what information shall be shared with the district.

Information related to the student's educational instability status shall be confidential and disclosed by the point of contact or other administrators only to other school staff who have a legitimate need to know unless authorized by the student or parent/guardian.[29][30]

#### Enrollment

Except when an unaccompanied youth or the parents/guardians of a homeless youth request otherwise, it shall be presumed that a student experiencing educational instability shall continue to be enrolled in their school of origin unless it is determined that it is not in the student's best interest to remain in the school of origin.[5][27]

In accordance with the homeless child's or youth's best interest, the district shall continue to enroll a homeless student in the student's school of origin within the district while the student remains homeless and through the end of the academic year in which the student obtains permanent housing.[27]

An unaccompanied youth or the parents/guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in any grade-appropriate school within the district regardless of the district attendance area where the student is actually living or a school of origin in another district.[27]

The district's point of contact shall assist an unaccompanied youth in placement or enrollment decisions, giving priority to the views of the student in determining where the student will be enrolled.[27]

#### *Best Interest Determination -*

The best interest determination shall be made in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, court orders and established local procedures.

In making a best interest determination, the district shall:[5][27]

1. In the case of a homeless child or unaccompanied youth, give priority to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.
2. Consider student-centered factors related to impact of mobility on achievement, education, appropriateness of the current educational setting, health and safety, and proximity to living arrangements including foster care placement.

The cost of transportation shall not be used as a factor in the best interest determination.

Documentation related to the best interest determination shall be maintained in the student's education record.[29][30]

#### *Timeliness of Enrollment -*

When a school receives a student experiencing educational instability, the school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if:[4][5][7][29][30][31][32][33][34][35]

1. The student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment.[27][31]
2. The application or enrollment deadline has passed.[27][31][32]

The district's point of contact shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain relevant academic or other records.[27]

The district may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information.

#### *Grade Level Assignment -*

If the district is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district may administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's assignment within the school.[36]

#### Dispute Resolution

If a dispute involving a student experiencing educational instability arises, the concern shall be addressed and/or resolved at the lowest appropriate level in accordance with Board policy, unless otherwise stated below.[37]

#### *Dispute Resolution for Homeless Students -*

If the district determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the unaccompanied youth or parent/guardian, the district shall provide the unaccompanied youth or parent/guardian with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination. The explanation shall be in a manner and form understandable to the unaccompanied youth or parent/guardian and shall include information regarding the right to appeal.[27]

If a dispute arises over eligibility, enrollment or school selection:[27]

1. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the district's point of contact, who shall assist in the dispute resolution process.
2. The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.
3. The district's point of contact shall issue a written decision of the dispute within twenty (20) business days of being notified of the dispute.

A parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth may file a complaint with the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.

#### *Dispute Resolution for Students in Foster Care -*

If a dispute arises over the appropriate school placement for a child in foster care, to the extent feasible and appropriate, the child shall remain in their school of origin, pending resolution of the dispute.[2][38]

### Students Discharged From Foster Care

A student who has been discharged from foster care may be permitted to finish the semester in this district, if appropriate, without payment of tuition. *The board shall not be responsible for transportation to or from school for any student discharged from Foster Care residing outside school district boundaries.*

### Education Records

Information about a student's educational instability shall be treated as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and shall not be deemed to be directory information.[29][30][39]

The district may disclose personally identifiable information from the education records of a student without written consent of the parent/guardian or the eligible student if the disclosure is:[29][30][39]

1. To comply with a court order authorizing the disclosure of education records in a case where a parent is a party to a proceeding involving child abuse or neglect or a dependency matter.
2. To an agency caseworker or other representative of a state or local child welfare agency, or tribal organization, who has the right to access a student's case plan, as defined and determined by the state or tribal organization, when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with state or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student, provided that the education records, or the personally identifiable information contained in such records, of the student will not be disclosed by such agency or organization, except to an individual or entity engaged in addressing the student's education needs and authorized by such agency or organization to receive such disclosure and such disclosure is consistent with the state or tribal laws applicable to protecting the confidentiality of a student's education records.

### Comparable Services

Students experiencing educational instability shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other district students including, but not limited to:[3][27][40]

1. Transportation services.[10]
2. School nutrition programs.[21]
3. Career and technical education.[12]
4. Educational programs for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as:
  - a. Services provided under Title I or similar state or local programs.[41]
  - b. Programs for English Learners.[42]
  - c. Programs for students with disabilities.[11]
  - d. Programs for gifted and talented students.[16]

### *Transportation for Homeless Students -*

The district shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the district.[3][10][27]

If the school of origin is outside district boundaries or homeless students live in another district but will attend their school of origin in this district, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.[27]

### *Transportation for Students in Foster Care –*

The district shall ensure that children in foster care needing transportation to their school of origin promptly receive transportation in a cost-effective manner.[6][10]

To ensure that transportation for children in foster care to their school of origin is provided, arranged, and funded, the district shall collaborate with the local children and youth agency to develop a local transportation plan.[6]

The transportation plan shall address the following:[6]

1. The procedure the district and local children and youth agency will follow to provide transportation for children in foster care in a cost-effective manner and in accordance with applicable law.[8]
2. How transportation costs will be covered if additional costs are incurred. Options include:
  - a. The local children and youth agency agrees to reimburse the district;
  - b. The district agrees to pay for the cost;[6]
  - c. The district and the local children and youth agency agree to share the costs; or
  - d. The district of origin, the district of foster residence, and the placing children and youth agency agree to share the costs.
3. Dispute resolution procedures to ensure that any disagreements regarding the cost of transportation are resolved promptly and fairly, and do not impact a student's ability to remain in the school of origin during the dispute resolution process.

The district shall submit the local transportation plan, including any updates or revisions, to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Transportation shall be provided to children in foster care in accordance with the local transportation plan regardless of whether transportation is provided to district students.

### Course Credit and Graduation

The district shall ensure that each student experiencing educational instability in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) is provided with a graduation plan to facilitate the student's timely graduation. The graduation plan shall specify the courses and other requirements necessary for the student to graduate. The district's efforts to ensure that the student experiencing educational instability graduates in a timely manner may include:[4][5][6]

1. Waiving a specific course required for graduation if similar coursework has been satisfactorily completed in another school entity or the student has demonstrated competency in that content area. Evidence as to whether coursework has been satisfactorily completed and the amount of full or partial credit assigned, may be determined through any of the following:[4][19]
  - a. Competency demonstration, which could include, but is not limited to:
    - i. Submission of an essay, presentation or project.
    - ii. Recognition that the student has already successfully completed a higher-level course, an experiential learning opportunity or internship that demonstrates competence in the content area.
  - b. Performance on an examination.
  - c. Successful completion of a career and technical education course.
  - d. Other evidence or method determined appropriate by the district.
2. If a specific course requirement cannot be waived, the district shall provide an alternative or modified course of study that is currently offered to students and that will assist the student with acquiring the required work or competency requirements by the anticipated graduation date.
3. If, after considering full and partial course credits, waiving courses or providing alternative courses of study, the district determines that the student meets the established graduation requirements, the student shall be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and graduate with their peers.

If the student is determined not eligible for graduation, the district may request a high school diploma from the prior school entity. The prior school entity may issue a diploma if the student meets the prior school entity's graduation requirements.

### *Keystone Diploma –*

In any school year for which demonstration of proficiency on a Keystone exam is required for graduation, a student who has successfully satisfied the graduation requirements may obtain a secondary school diploma known as the Keystone Diploma from the PA Department of Education, if both of the following provisions apply:[4][43]

1. All other graduation options have been exhausted.

2. The student is unable to obtain a diploma from the student's prior or receiving school entity.

The district's point of contact shall assist the student in determining the student's eligibility for a Keystone Diploma and, if eligible, obtaining the Keystone Diploma from the PA Department of Education.[4][43]

#### *Students with Disabilities –*

Students experiencing educational instability who have an IEP shall maintain the right to special education and the right to graduate either through attainment of credits or through the completion of the goals established in their IEP.[11][19]

Students with an IEP may elect to remain in school until age twenty-one (21) even if the district determines there is an earlier pathway to graduation. Such students may participate in the graduation ceremony with their current graduating class, even if the student elected to remain in school.[19]

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS - MCKINNEY VENTO ACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions about whether you or your family qualify under the McKinney Vento Act, you can contact Jennifer Connelly at [jennifer.connely@gcasdk12.org](mailto:jennifer.connely@gcasdk12.org) or 724-458-6733 X 2140.

Grove City has numerous community resources for families in need of assistance. Below is a list of some of these resources:

**All Good Things Thrift Shop** - (724) 264-4307

**Beloved Mercy Ministries-** (724) 761-1221

**Christian Assistance Network (CAN)** - <https://www.christianassistancenetwork.org/> (724) 992-3193

**Grove City Food Pantry** - [www.gcccommunityfoodpantry.org](http://www.gcccommunityfoodpantry.org) (724) 458-5208 (724) 967-5852 for food emergencies

**Grove City United Way-** [www.grovecityunitedway.org](http://www.grovecityunitedway.org) (724) 458-4527

**Grove City Salvation Army** - <https://satruck.org/> (724) 458-9840

The Grove City Area School District employs a social worker, Mrs. Amber Fitch, who is here to help with any family needs. Mrs. Fitch has helped with the following:

- Helping families set up medical appointment
- Helping families get to appointments
- Helping families complete paperwork for Medicaid
- Helping families complete paperwork for housing assistance
- Helping families gain assistance for monthly rent payments
- Helping families with housing bills

*\*This list is not all-inclusive.*

If you want to speak to Mrs. Fitch, she can be reached at [amber.fitch@gcasdk12.org](mailto:amber.fitch@gcasdk12.org) or 724-458-5456.

# Maintaining Professional Adult/Student Boundaries Policy

**Book: Policy**

**Section: 800 Operations**

**Title: Maintaining Professional Adult/Student Boundaries**

**Manual Number: 824**

**Status: Active**

**Adopted: June 20, 2016**

**Last Revised: March 10, 2025**

## **Authority**

This policy applies to district employees, volunteers, student teachers and independent contractors and their employees who interact with students or are present on school grounds. For purposes of this policy, such individuals are referred to collectively as adults. The term adults as used in this policy, does not include district students who perform services on a volunteer or compensated basis.

All adults shall be expected to maintain professional, moral and ethical relationships with district students that are conducive to an effective, safe learning environment. This policy addresses a range of behaviors that include not only obviously unlawful or improper interactions with students, but also precursor grooming and other boundary-blurring behaviors that can lead to more egregious misconduct.

The Board directs that all adults shall be informed of conduct that is prohibited and the disciplinary actions that may be applied for violation of Board policies, administrative regulations, rules and procedures.[1]

This policy is not intended to interfere with appropriate pre-existing personal relationships between adults and students and their families that exist independently of the district or to interfere with participation in civic, religious or other outside organizations that include district students.

## **Definition**

For purposes of this policy, legitimate educational reasons include matters or communications related to teaching, counseling, athletics, extracurricular activities, treatment of a student's physical injury or other medical needs, school administration or other purposes within the scope of the adult's assigned job duties.

## **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Superintendent or designee shall annually inform students, parents/guardians and all adults regarding the contents of this Board policy through employee and student handbooks, posting on the district website and by other appropriate methods.

The building principal or designee shall be available to answer questions about behaviors or activities that may violate professional boundaries as defined in this policy.

Independent contractors doing business with the district shall ensure that their employees who have interaction with students or are present on school grounds are informed of the provisions of this policy.[2]

## **Guidelines**

Adults shall establish and maintain appropriate personal boundaries with students and not engage in any behavior that is prohibited by this policy or that creates the appearance of prohibited behavior.

## **Prohibited Conduct**

### *Romantic or Sexual Relationships -*

Adults shall be prohibited from dating, courting or entering into or attempting to form a romantic or sexual relationship with any student enrolled in the district, regardless of the student's age. Students of any age are not legally capable of consenting to romantic or sexual interactions with adults.[3][4]

Prohibited romantic or sexual interaction involving students includes, but is not limited to:

1. Sexual physical contact.
2. Romantic flirtation, propositions or sexual remarks.
3. Sexual slurs, leering, epithets, sexual or derogatory comments.
4. Personal comments about a student's body.
5. Sexual jokes, notes, stories, drawings, gestures or pictures.
6. Spreading sexual or romantic rumors.
7. Touching a student's body or clothes in a sexual or intimate way.
8. Accepting massages, or offering or giving massages other than in the course of injury care legitimately administered by an athletic trainer, coach or health care provider.
9. Restricting a student's freedom of movement in a sexually intimidating or provocative manner.
10. Displaying or transmitting sexual objects, pictures or depictions.

#### ***Social Interactions -***

In order to maintain professional boundaries, adults shall ensure that their interactions with students are appropriate.

Examples of prohibited conduct that violates professional boundaries include, but are not limited to:

1. Disclosing personal, sexual, family, employment concerns or other private matters to one or more students.
2. Exchanging notes, emails or other communications of a personal nature with a student.
3. Giving personal gifts, cards or letters to a student without written approval from the building principal.
4. Touching students without a legitimate educational reason. (Reasons could include the need for assistance when injured, a kindergartner having a toileting accident and requiring assistance, appropriate coaching instruction or appropriate music instruction).
5. Singling out a particular student or students for personal attention or friendship beyond the ordinary professional adult-student relationship.
6. Taking a student out of class without a legitimate educational reason.
7. Being alone with a student behind closed doors without a legitimate educational reason.
8. Initiating or extending contact with a student beyond the school day or outside of class times without a legitimate educational reason.
9. Sending or accompanying a student on personal errands.
10. Inviting a student to the adult's home.
11. Going to a student's home without a legitimate educational reason.
12. Taking a student on outings without prior notification to and approval from both the parent/guardian and the building principal.
13. Giving a student a ride alone in a vehicle in a nonemergency situation without prior notification to and approval from both the parent/guardian and the building principal.
14. Addressing students or permitting students to address adults with personalized terms of endearment, pet names or otherwise in an overly familiar manner.
15. Telling a student personal secrets, sharing personal secrets with a student or asking students to keep any conversation, gift or activity a secret.
16. For adults who are not guidance/counseling staff, psychologists, social workers or other adults with designated responsibilities to counsel students, encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships. If a student initiates such discussions, the student should be referred to the appropriate school resource.
17. Furnishing alcohol, drugs or tobacco to a student or being present where any student is consuming these substances.
18. Engaging in harassing or discriminatory conduct prohibited by other district policies or by state or federal law and regulations.[5][6]

#### ***Electronic Communications -***

For purposes of this policy, electronic communication shall mean a communication transmitted by means

of an electronic device including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant or pager. Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, emails, instant messages and communications made by means of an Internet website, including social media and other networking websites.

As with other forms of communication, when communicating electronically, adults shall maintain professional boundaries with students.

Electronic communication with students shall be for legitimate educational reasons only.

When available, district-provided email or other district-provided communication devices or platforms shall be used when communicating electronically with students. The use of district-provided email or other district-provided communication devices or platforms shall be in accordance with district policies and procedures.[7]

All electronic communications from coaches and advisors to team or club members shall be sent in a single communication to all participating team or club members, except for communications concerning an individual student's medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the communications will be copied to the building principal. In the case of sports teams under the direction of the Athletic Director, such medical or academic communications shall also be copied to the Athletic Director.

Adults shall not follow or send or accept requests for current students to be friends or connections on personal social networking sites and shall not create any networking site for communication with students other than those provided by the district for this purpose, without the prior written approval of the building principal.

### **Exceptions**

An emergency situation or a legitimate educational reason may justify deviation from the rules regarding communication or methods for maintaining professional boundaries set out in this policy. The adult shall be prepared to articulate the reason for any deviation from the requirements of this policy and must demonstrate that they have maintained an appropriate relationship with the student.

Under no circumstance will an educational or other reason justify deviation from the "Romantic and Sexual Relationships" section of this policy.

There will be circumstances where personal relationships develop between an adult and a student's family, e.g. when their children become friends. This policy is not intended to interfere with such relationships or to limit activities that are consistent with such relationships. Adults are strongly encouraged to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to the nature of the activity.

It is understood that many adults are involved in various other roles in the community through nondistrict-related civic, religious, athletic, scouting or other organizations and programs whose participants may include district students. Such community involvement is commendable, and this policy is not intended to interfere with or restrict an adult's ability to serve in those roles; however, adults are strongly encouraged to maintain professional boundaries appropriate to the nature of the activity with regard to all youth with whom they interact in the course of their community involvement.

### **Reporting Inappropriate or Suspicious Conduct**

Any person, including a student, who has concerns about or is uncomfortable with a relationship or interaction between an adult and a student, shall promptly notify the building principal or Title IX Coordinator. Reports may be made using the Discrimination/Harassment/Bullying/Hazing/Dating Violence/Retaliation Report Form or by making a general report orally or in writing. Upon receipt of a report, school staff shall promptly notify the Title IX Coordinator.[5][8]

All district employees, independent contractors and volunteers who have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of child abuse, shall immediately report the suspected abuse, in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.[9][10]

An educator who knows of any action, inaction or conduct which constitutes sexual abuse or exploitation

or sexual misconduct under the Educator Discipline Act shall report such misconduct to the Pennsylvania Department of Education on the required form, and shall report such misconduct to the Superintendent, Title IX Coordinator and immediate supervisor, promptly, but not later than **fifteen (15) days following discovery of such misconduct.**[5][8][11][12]

If the Superintendent or designee reasonably suspects that conduct being reported involves an incident required to be reported under the Child Protective Services Law, the Educator Discipline Act or the school safety and security provisions of School Code, the Superintendent or designee shall make a report, in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.[9][10][11][12][13][14][15][16][17][18]

It is a violation of Board policy to retaliate against any person for reporting any action pursuant to this policy or for participating as a witness in any related investigation or hearing.[5][8]

### **Investigation**

The Title IX Coordinator shall promptly assess and address allegations of inappropriate conduct in accordance with the procedures for reports of discrimination/harassment.[5][8]

It is understood that some reports made pursuant to this policy will be based on rumors or misunderstandings; the mere fact that the reported adult is cleared of any wrongdoing shall not result in disciplinary action against the person making the report or any witnesses. If as the result of an investigation any individual, including the reported adult, the person making the report or a witness is found to have knowingly provided false information in making the report or during the investigation or hearings related to the report, or if any individual intentionally obstructs the investigation or hearings, this may be addressed as a violation of this policy and other applicable laws, regulations and Board policies. Obstruction includes, but is not limited to, violation of “no contact” orders given to the reported adult, attempting to alter or influence witness testimony and destruction of or hiding evidence.[5][8][12][19][20][21][22]

### **Disciplinary Action**

A district employee who violates this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in accordance with all applicable district disciplinary policies and procedures.[8][12][19]

A volunteer, student teacher, or independent contractor or an employee of an independent contractor who violates this policy may be prohibited from working or serving in district schools for an appropriate period of time or permanently, as determined by the Superintendent or designee.

### **Training**

The district shall provide training with respect to the provisions of this policy to current and new district employees, volunteers and student teachers subject to this policy.

The district, at its sole discretion, may require independent contractors and their employees who interact with students or are present on school grounds to receive training on this policy and related procedures.

# Tobacco and Vaping Products Policy

**Book: Policy Manual**      **Section: 200 Pupils**  
**Number: 222**              **Status: Active**  
**Last Revised: August 12, 2024**

**Title: Tobacco**  
**Adopted: January 20, 2014**

## Purpose

The Board recognizes that tobacco and vaping products, including electronic cigarettes, present a health and safety hazard that can have serious consequences for users, nonusers and the school environment. The purpose of this policy is to prohibit student possession, use, purchase and sale of tobacco and vaping products.

## **Definition**

For purposes of this policy, tobacco product encompasses not only tobacco but also vaping products including electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). Tobacco products, for purposes of this policy and in accordance with state law, shall be defined to include the following:[1][2]

1. Any product containing, made or derived from tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption, whether smoked, heated, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, snorted, sniffed or ingested by any other means, including, but not limited to, a cigarette, cigar, little cigar, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, snuff and snus.
2. Any electronic device that delivers nicotine or another substance to a person inhaling from the device, including, but not limited to, electronic nicotine delivery systems, an electronic cigarette, a cigar, a pipe and a hookah.
3. Any product containing, made or derived from either:
  - a. Tobacco, whether in its natural or synthetic form; or
  - b. Nicotine, whether in its natural or synthetic form, which is regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration as a deemed tobacco product.
4. Any component, part or accessory of the product or electronic device listed in this definition, whether or not sold separately.

## **The term tobacco product does not include the following:[1][2]**

1. A product that has been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for sale as a tobacco cessation product or for other therapeutic purposes where the product is marketed and sold solely for such approved purpose, as long as the product is not inhaled. NOTE: *This exception shall be governed by Board policy relating to Medications.*[3]

## **Authority**

The Board prohibits possession, use, purchase or sale of tobacco products, regardless of whether such products contain tobacco or nicotine, by or to students at any time in a school building; on school buses or other vehicles that are owned, leased or controlled by the school district; on property owned, leased or controlled by the school district; or at school-sponsored activities that are held off school property.[1][2][5]

The Board prohibits student possession or use of products marketed and sold as tobacco cessation products or for other therapeutic purposes, except as authorized in the Board's Medication policy.[3]

The Board prohibits student possession of any form of medical marijuana at any time in a school building; on school buses or other vehicles that are owned, leased or controlled by the school district; on property owned, leased or controlled by the school district; or at school-sponsored activities that are held off school property.[4]

The Board authorizes the confiscation and disposal of tobacco products prohibited by this policy.

In the case of a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, the district shall take all steps required to comply with state and federal laws and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with law enforcement and Board policies.[6][7][8][9][10][11]

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall notify students, parents/guardians and staff about the Board's tobacco and vaping products policy by publishing information in student handbooks, parental newsletters, posters and by other efficient methods, such as posted notices, signs, Code of Student Conduct and on the district website.[2]

### **Reporting**

#### ***Parental Report –***

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving possession, use, purchase or sale of a tobacco product, immediately, as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian whether the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian.[11][12][13]

#### ***Annual School Safety and Security Incidents Report -***

The Superintendent shall annually, by July 31, report all incidents of possession, use or sale of tobacco products by students to the PA Department of Education on the required form.[11][14][15]

#### ***Law Enforcement Incident Report –***

The Superintendent or designee may report incidents of possession, use or sale of tobacco products by students on school property, at any school-sponsored activity or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity to the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with law enforcement and Board policies.[1][2][11][12][14][15][16]

### **Guidelines**

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to prosecution initiated by the district and, if convicted, shall be required to pay a fine for the benefit of the district, plus court costs. In lieu of the imposition of a fine, the court may admit the student to an adjudication alternative.[2]

School counselors shall provide students who have violated this policy with information regarding available tobacco cessation programs.

Tampering with devices installed to detect use of tobacco products shall be deemed a violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary action.[17]

## **Board Policies**

[103 Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Students](#)

[103.1 Non-Discrimination- Qualified Students with Disabilities](#)

[104 Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Staff](#)

[105.1 Curriculum Review by Parents/Guardians and Students](#)

[200 Enrollment](#)

[204 Attendance](#)

[209.1 Food Allergy Management](#)

[210.1 Possession/Administration of Asthma Inhalers/Epinephrine Auto Injectors](#)

[216 Student Records](#)

[218 Student Discipline](#)

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[220 Student Expression/Distribution and Posting of Materials](#)

[222 Tobacco and Vaping Products](#)

[226 Searches](#)

[227 Controlled Substances](#)

[235 Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)

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[237 Electronic Devices](#)

[246 Student Wellness](#)

[247 Hazing](#)

[249 Bullying/Cyberbullying](#)

[251 Students Experiencing Homelessness, Foster Care, and Other Educational Instability](#)

[806 Child Abuse](#)

[808 Food Services](#)

[810 Transportation](#)

[810.2 Transportation - Video/Audio Recording](#)

[815 Acceptable Use of Internet, Computers and Network Resources](#)

[824 Maintaining Professional Adult/Student Boundaries](#)

[904 Public Attendance at School Events](#)