

Preschool Student Handbook 2026-2027



Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools
**INSPIRING LEARNERS
BUILDING FUTURES**

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WELCOME

Welcome to the 2026-2027 academic year in Gahanna-Jefferson preschool. Our staff is excited to start the new school year, and we cannot wait to meet, reconnect with and develop strong partnerships with the entire school community!

This handbook has been prepared for the purpose of answering questions that are frequently asked by students, parents/guardians, and families. It contains essential details about our Gahanna-Jefferson preschool. Please take time to read this information, review it with your child/ren, and keep it for your reference throughout the school year. Should you have any questions that are not answered, please don't hesitate to contact your teacher or building administrator.

Sincerely,

April Hunter
Coordinator of GJPS Preschool Program

DISTRICT CONTACTS

Board of Education

Kara Coates, President
Daphne Moehring, Vice President
Megan Dimmerling, Board Member
Sue Horn, Board Member
Dion Manley, Board Member

District Board Office

380 Granville Street
Gahanna, OH 43230
614-471-7065

District Office Leaders

Tracey R. Deagle, PhD, Superintendent
Cliff Hetzel, Treasurer
Jill Elliott, Assistant Superintendent
Kevin Klingler, Chief Operating Officer
Jason Bates, Director of College, Career, Pathways & Partnerships
Matt Blackwell, Director of Technology
Zack Duberstein, EdD, Director of Principal Leadership
Corinne Fields, Director of Special Education
Tia Holliman, Director of Curriculum
Sue LeHota, Director of Special Education (retiring 12.31.26)
Shea Reed, Director of Human Resources
Erick Starkey, Public Information Coordinator

DISTRICT WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

For more information about our district, please visit us:

On the Web - www.GahannaSchools.org

On Facebook - www.facebook.com/GahannaJeffersonSchools

On Twitter - @GahannaJeffersn

On Instagram - @GahannaJeffersn

On YouTube - Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools

GJPS PRESCHOOL LOCATION & BUILDING ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Clark Hall Preschool

380 Granville St. Suite B.

Gahanna, Ohio 43230

614-269-4780

Coordinator: April Hunter

Secretary: Mary Ann Stevens

GAHANNA-JEFFERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
**INSPIRING LEARNERS
BUILDING FUTURES**



**OUR
VISION**

IGNITE a passion for lifelong learning
ENRICH student experiences
CHAMPION pathways to success for all



**OUR
MISSION**

Empower students
for **LIFELONG SUCCESS**
by ensuring that
STUDENT LEARNING is our
top priority, preparing each student
to **CONTINUALLY THRIVE** in an
ever-changing world.

**OUR
VALUES**

**INTEGRITY
COLLABORATION
INCLUSIVITY**

**STUDENTS FIRST
EMPOWERMENT
EXCELLENCE**

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools 2026-2027 School Calendar

August 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16*	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22*	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August						
17 - PD Day						
18 - Convocation/Staff Work Day						
19 - Staff Work Day						
20 - First Day of School						

September						
7 - Labor Day - No School						
21 - PD Day - No School						

October						
16 - End of 1st Quarter*						
19 - Conference Comp Day - No School						
20 - Staff Work Day - No School						

November						
9 - PD Day - No School						
11 - Veteran's Day						
25-27 - Thanksgiving Break						

December						
22 - End of 1st Semester (2nd Quarter)*						
23-31 - Winter Break - No School						

January						
1 - Winter Break/New Years Day - No School						
4 - Staff Work Day - No School						
18 - MLK Day - No School						

February						
15 - President's Day - No School						

March						
5 - End of 3rd Quarter*						
8 - Staff Work Day - No School						
9 - PD Day - No School						
26 - Conference Comp Day - No School						
29-31 - Spring Break - No School						

April						
1-2 - Spring Break - No School						
30 - PD Day - No School						

May						
27 - End 2nd Semester (4th Quarter)*						
27 - Last Day of School						
28 - Staff Work Day						
29 - Graduation						
31 - Memorial Day						

January 2027						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2027						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2027						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5*	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2027						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2027						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27*	28	29
30	31					

GJPS staff will be mindful of all religious holidays when planning instruction & assessment.
This calendar is subject to change.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Students who live within the boundaries of our school district and are between the ages of 3 and 5 may be eligible for special education services through a multi-factored evaluation process.

Enrollment for those eligible students is the same as all students in the Gahanna-Jefferson Public School District. Our program does not discriminate in any way on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. We welcome all young children with disabilities. In addition, we offer opportunities for non-disabled children to join the preschool program as peer models. Peer families pay monthly tuition and parents/guardians provide transportation. Openings are limited and applications are accepted beginning in the spring for the next school year.

CENTER-BASED PROGRAMMING

We provide preschool center-based programming at Clark Hall. Preschoolers with disabilities and typical peer models who participate in our center-based classrooms attend a morning or afternoon session. Parents/Guardians are provided a daily schedule upon enrollment in the program.

Each preschool classroom is staffed with a certified Early Childhood Intervention Specialist and an educational aide. A speech therapist, occupational therapist and physical therapist are assigned to classrooms as prescribed by Individual Education Plans (IEP's). The preschool has a coordinator to oversee curriculum, instruction, licensing, and all components of the program.

ITINERANT PROGRAMMING

Itinerant-based programming is available to assist preschoolers with identified disabilities in their home, community-based preschool, local daycare, or at a scheduled session in a center-based preschool location. Itinerant-based services are provided within district boundaries.

Itinerant services are scheduled with the teacher and/or related service staff based on the location and amount of time designated on the Individualized Education Plan. Itinerant sessions within the center-based preschool will not be rescheduled if students are late and/or absent without prior notice from the parents/guardians.

PEER MODEL PROGRAM

Our preschool program values and strives to integrate typically-developing preschoolers (peer models) with our students with disabilities. GJPS offers a preschool program that serves children with disabilities and also provides an educational opportunity for typically-developing children to serve as social and academic peer models. Enrollment is open to children of district residents and children of GJPS staff. An application must be submitted. New peer model applications will not be accepted after March 31, 2027 for the current school year.

Peer models are eligible to attend the half-day program based upon the following guidelines:

- Peers must reside within the Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools attendance area or be the child of a staff member.
- Peers must be 3.5 years old by August 20, 2026 to enroll.

- Peers younger than 3.5 years old may enroll earlier, but will not be able to begin school until they are 3.5 years. If the child enrolls earlier, parents/guardians must pay the monthly tuition to hold the spot for their child.
- Peers must be toilet trained (not in pull ups).
- Peers must enjoy playing with other children, interacting well with others and engaging in age-appropriate activities independently.
- Peers must demonstrate strong communication skills: follow simple directions, answer questions, and make their needs known.
- Peers must be a good role model: displays appropriate behavior and social skills, and separates easily from parents/guardians.
- Peers must complete and submit the entire enrollment packet (including medical and history forms).
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for agreeing to the contract, including monthly tuition payments.
- Parents/Guardians must provide transportation to/from preschool.

HALF-DAY TUITION FOR PEER MODELS

The half-day peer model program is \$140 per month. A nonrefundable deposit of \$50 will be applied to the first month of tuition. Short months, five-week months, holidays, and snow days have been averaged. This means you will pay the same amount each month (September through May). Deductions will not be made for a child's absence due to illness. There also will be no deductions for family vacations.

Preschool tuition can be paid in the Infinite Campus portal, cash or check each month.

Refunds are **not** offered for the time period your child attends the preschool program as a peer model if your child qualifies for special education services as a preschooler with a disability.

LATE PICK UP FEES

Parents/Guardians of peer model(s) who pick up their child after the scheduled pick-up time will be charged a late fee equal to \$1.00 per minute, per child. The receptionist will be asked to complete a **Late Pick Up Acknowledgement** form for parents/guardians who pick up their child after the scheduled pickup time. Parents/Guardians will be asked to sign the **Late Pick Up Acknowledgement** form and will be given a copy before leaving the preschool with their child. The fee must be paid in cash or check to the receptionist at Clark Hall, 380 Granville St., Suite B. Gahanna, Ohio 43230 **before** the child can be admitted back to their preschool class. If there are more than **six** violations, then your child may be dismissed from the program.

NON-PAYMENT

Tuition is due on the 15th day of each month. In the event that a transaction fails, a \$3.35 fee will be added to your Parent Portal within 30 days. A notification will be sent if tuition is not received within 5 days. Your child will not be allowed to attend preschool until tuition is received. Unpaid tuition will be maintained on your child's Infinite Campus account until payment is received.

SCHOOL HOURS

AM Session: 8:45 AM - 11:30 AM

PM Session: 12:30 PM - 3:15 PM

In the event, Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools implements a two-hour delay or early dismissal, the morning or afternoon session aligned with the closing will be canceled for the day.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

All preschool students who are transported by a parent and/or guardian must follow the arrival and dismissal procedures established by each preschool location.

8:45 AM/12:30 PM	Doors open
11:20 AM/3:05 PM	Bus riders dismissed
11:25AM/3:10 PM	Car riders dismissed

All parents/guardians shall adhere to the following guidelines during drop off/pick up:

1. Students should not arrive before 8:45 a.m./12:30p.m. Students will not be permitted to enter the building until 8:45 a.m./12:30p.m.
2. Parents/Guardians will be required to park and walk their child to and from the designated drop/off location which will be communicated by administration.
3. Parents/Guardians should not congregate in pick up and drop off locations.
4. Students will only be released to assigned bus drivers, parents/guardians, or those individuals who are designated on the child's release form. If someone else is picking up your child, please send a note or call the school. Those individuals unfamiliar to classroom staff will be asked to show identification.
5. Parents/Guardians are encouraged not to walk their child back to the classroom unless the child is having a difficult time transitioning into the building. If the student is requiring support each day, an individual plan will be set up for the child in collaboration with the parents/guardians.

BUS ACCESS & EXPECTATIONS

Transportation is provided by the district as a related service for students with disabilities only upon parents/guardians request. All transportation requests must be submitted to the preschool coordinator or secretary. Requests can take up to 5 school days for transportation to start. Preschool students will ride preschool-only buses.

Preschool buses provide curb to curb transportation services. Students will be escorted to and from buses by preschool staff. Each student that rides a bus will have accommodations determined per their IEP. All of our preschool students will wear a seatbelt unless another accommodation is specified in their IEP.

GJPS will transport students on an IEP to a daycare center or babysitter as long as the location is within our school district boundaries. Parents/Guardians are responsible for communicating this need to transportation and the preschool. Transportation will not change a bus stop that is temporary (i.e. one week at one stop, the next week at another stop). A parent/designee must accompany the child to the bus and assist on steps, if needed.

GJPS may transport siblings of students that have current IEP's if the sibling is enrolled at GJPS preschool and go to and from the same locations. Transportation may only be eligible to siblings if seats are available on the bus. Transportation will communicate with the family if the bus is no longer able to transport the sibling.

If a student is eligible for busing, the bus number, pickup/drop-off times, and the location of the bus stop will be detailed on the district's transportation app.

Students are not permitted to ride any bus other than the one assigned to them. For an emergency situation where parents/guardians will not be home after school, a note must be sent by **both** families stating the student can go home with the friend. This must be approved in the building office.

Students riding the bus must follow the rules established by the Board of Education and ORC 3301-83-08 (C) for the safety of all concerned. Students not following the rules will be subject to written reprimands and could face possible dismissal and/or suspension from bus-riding privileges.

The following are prohibited on GJPS buses:

1. Changing seats, standing, walking around while bus is in motion
2. Noise at railroad crossings and other danger points
3. Excessive noise, loud talking or laughter at any time
4. Distracting the bus driver in any manner
5. Putting any part of body outside of bus
6. Scuffling or fighting on the bus
7. Spitting or throwing any object on, to or from the bus
8. Smoking, vaping or lighting matches/lighter on the bus
9. Eating, drinking, or littering
10. Failure to obey the driver
11. Transporting animals - dead or alive
12. Transporting any glass container on bus
13. Damaging or marking any part of the bus
14. Use of profane or unbecoming language
15. Taking photos or videos

A Bus Transfer Request form must be submitted to the school office if parents/guardians wish to have their student picked up or returned to an address other than their own on a regular basis. This form can be found in the school office and online at the GJPS Transportation Website.

Transportation questions can be addressed by calling 614-751-7581 (Transportation Department).

RECESS

Students will have a minimum of 20 minutes to play at recess. Recess will be held outdoors unless the temperature or windchill are below 30 degrees and students should dress properly to stay warm outside. If a student needs to stay inside from recess, a doctor's note is required providing detailed restrictions and other arrangements will be made.

CHILD NUTRITION

SNACK

GJPS preschool is a peanut free school. Students' snacks must meet allergy restrictions for all students in the class. This will be monitored by teachers. A letter will be sent to parents/guardians at the start of the school year with a list of safe snacks for that class/year. Teachers will plan ahead for community trips, field trips and class-wide activities or meals and will follow all allergy restrictions in order to allow all students to participate.

Students should pack a healthy snack and drink daily. Foods such as grapes should be cut up as a preventative measure for choking hazards. Staff may offer the child a different safe snack option if there are safety concerns with the snack that was provided by the parents/guardians.

SCHOOL FEES

All Gahanna-Jefferson students are required to pay an annual instructional fee of \$17.50 at the beginning of each school year. Fees can be paid in the Infinite Campus portal. Any unpaid fees will remain on your child's account until payment is received.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION (EMA)

On or before the 30th day of the new school year, all Gahanna-Jefferson families are required to complete and update each student's Emergency Medical Authorization (EMA) form at the beginning of each school year. EMA information is critical to ensuring we are supporting each student appropriately and updates should be made in the Infinite Campus as a part of the annual parent portal update.

In the event emergency medical treatment for a student is necessary, the District will adhere to the instructions on the electronic authorization form. If a parent refuses to grant consent for emergency medical treatment, the parent may indicate on the EMA form (i.e., Part II) the procedure the parent wishes school authorities to follow for medical emergencies involving their student.

A completed EMA will be required. Failure to have updated an EMA may also result in restrictions from school activities. Even if there are no changes to student EMA information, a parent/guardian must certify we have the current information each year through the Infinite Campus portal annual update. Failure to update your student's EMA, will also result in the following message which will appear when logging into the parent portal:

“Our records indicate you have not updated your student’s information in the Student Information System for this school year. Those updates must be completed before the parent portal can be accessed.”

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are academic activities that are held off school grounds. **In order to participate, students must turn in a permission form signed by parents or guardians.** Field trips are supervised by teachers and may include a limited number of parents/guardians who volunteer to chaperone. Siblings are not permitted to attend field trips. Students will not be permitted to attend any off site field trips unless the Emergency Medical information has been updated in Infinite Campus.

All students should travel to and from the field trip on the school bus provided by the district. However, if a guardian intends to take their student home from a field trip, the student must be signed out with the teacher. When a student is signed out from a field trip, attendance will be marked accordingly in Infinite Campus. A parent/guardian may only take their own student and cannot transport other students.

Any parent serving as a chaperone on a school field trip where they are responsible for supervising students without district staff will be required to complete a background check following district procedures.

REPORT CARDS, PROGRESS REPORT & FAMILY CONFERENCES

GJPS preschool uses a standards based reporting system to report progress on grade level expectations every trimester.

The end of the reporting periods will be as follows:

- End of 1st trimester - November 13, 2026
- End of 2nd trimester - February 19, 2027
- End of 3rd trimester - May 27, 2027

Preschool progress updates will be provided throughout the year as outlined below:

Trimester 1 - Progress to be communicated with families during Fall Conferences. If a family cannot attend Fall Conferences, the teacher will send conference summary information home for guardians to review.

Trimester 2 - Progress to be communicated with families during Spring Conferences. If a family cannot attend Spring Conferences, the teacher will send conference summary information home for guardians to review.

Trimester 3 - If a teacher has concerns about academic or behavioral progress, information specific to identified concern areas should be communicated to guardians.

Family conferences will be held two times during the school year - once in the Fall and once in the Spring. Each building will identify and communicate family conference nights which will be held within the following windows:

- *1st Semester:* October 5 - October 16
- *2nd Semester:* February 8 - February 19

Parents/Guardians of students with disabilities will receive progress reports each trimester regarding their child's progress on IEP goals and objectives specified in their IEPs. Teachers and related service staff collect weekly data regarding progress on IEP goals and objectives. IEP progress reports will be made available electronically to parents/guardians through Samegoal. All students will receive three progress reports that will be provided electronically or in paper form, one at the end of each trimester.

CURRICULUM, STUDENT ASSESSMENT & ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES

PRESCHOOL EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards describe key concepts and skills that young children develop during the birth-to-five-year period. Their purpose is to support the development and well-being of young children and to foster their learning. The standards promote the understanding of early learning and development, provide a comprehensive and coherent set of expectations for children's development and learning, and guide the design and implementation of curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices with young children.

The standards present a continuum of learning and development from birth to age five in each of the domains. More information can be found on the Ohio Department of Education website under Early Childhood.

Gahanna-Preschool will be rated by Step Up to Quality, a tiered quality rating and improvement system operated by the Ohio Department of Education. Step Up To Quality will replace the Early Learning Program Guidelines and will be used by all state funded early learning programs throughout the state of Ohio. To find out more information on Step Up to Quality visit the Step Up To Quality [website](#).

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

The District is required to assess student achievement and needs in all program areas in compliance with State law and the rules adopted by the State Board of Education. The purpose of such assessments will be to determine the progress of students and to assist them in attaining student performance objectives and the educational achievement goals of this District.

Parents/Guardians may request policies regarding student participation in state mandated assessments as well as information on each assessment required by the state.

Please read the full assessment policy [here](#).

SCREENING

Peer Models must participate in an online screening during the registration process into the preschool program. GJPS uses a screening that requires parent input. Parents/Guardians are eligible to opt out of the screening by emailing the Coordinator of Special Education. The teacher will discuss the outcome with parents/guardians during parent teacher conferences, a phone conference or face-to-face meeting. Any student scoring below the range expected for the age of the child will be monitored for additional follow-up.

STATE-REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS

The Ohio Department of Education requires that several assessments are administered for students in all publicly funded early childhood programs, and the results of those assessments are reported to their department.

The Early Learning Assessment - administered to all preschool students with disabilities twice a year. This assessment addresses several learning progressions that are outlined by the Ohio Department of Education.

The Childhood Outcomes Summary - required for preschool children with disabilities. It ensures that these students will reach or maintain a level commensurate with same-age peers and/or improve functioning level in the following areas:

- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy)
- Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)
- Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

The classroom staff will also complete the district's Curriculum-Based Assessment. This is an ongoing formative assessment that helps guide our classroom planning in the areas of Fine Motor, Gross Motor, Adaptive/Self Help, Cognitive, Communication and Social Skills. All parents/guardians are notified of their child's performance on these assessments at parent/teacher conferences.

VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS

In order to protect the educational environment of the school from undue disturbances, persons wishing to visit classrooms when school is in session must contact the principal to schedule an appointment. Formal conferences outside of the instructional time can be scheduled by contacting the individual teacher. We encourage parent volunteers. Parents/Guardians and visitors will need to ring the bell and be identified by the secretary to enter the building. **All visitors will have to scan their driver's license or ID and must sign in and wear a visitor badge when inside the building.**

Volunteer Application and Background Check Required

To increase safety and security protocols, all GJPS volunteers who may have the potential to interact with students in an **unsupervised setting** or may have access to confidential information

will be required to complete an online application that includes a background check. The district will provide the background checks at no cost to the volunteer.

Examples of volunteer experiences include but are not limited to: cafeteria helpers, reading aides, mentors, hall monitors, field day volunteers, library helpers, office helpers, tutors, field trip chaperones, small group or individual student work in the hallway, party helpers, concession workers, fundraising volunteers, book fair volunteers, mobile dentist volunteers, etc.

Steps to Volunteer

1. Contact the coordinator or teacher to express an interest in volunteering.
2. Your principal or teacher will send you a link to the Online Volunteer Application and background check.
3. Complete the Online Volunteer Application and Background Check **at least 5 days before** your initial volunteer experience.
4. Renew your Volunteer Application and Background Check yearly from the date of issuance.

The school visitor policy can be found [here](#).

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools Code of Conduct seeks to maintain an appropriate educational atmosphere that fosters self-discipline in all students. The district is committed to implementing a system of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to promote school safety, appropriate choices and exceptional citizenship within the school setting. All students are expected to be responsible and to conduct themselves properly and in accordance with Federal, State, and local laws, Board policies and Administrative Guidelines, and in a way that respects the rights and safety of others (Policy 5500-Student Conduct). Further, the Board believes that students should assume responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their actions.

It is the responsibility of students, teachers and administrators to maintain a school environment that:

- Allows teachers to communicate effectively with all students;
- Allows all students the opportunity to learn;
- Allows all students and staff to attend and participate in a safe manner;
- Has consequences that are fair and developmentally appropriate;
- Considers the student and the circumstances of the situation; and
- Enforces the Student Code of Conduct accordingly.

A student may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of the Student Code of Conduct even if the misconduct occurs on property not owned or controlled by the Board, but that is connected to activities or incidents that have occurred on property owned or controlled by the Board, or misconduct that, regardless of where it occurs, is directed at a Board official or employee, or the property of such official or employee, or otherwise impacts the educational environment. In addition, a student may be subject to discipline for misconduct that occurs as follows:

- A. On school grounds during school hours including the time immediately preceding and after school.
- B. On school grounds during a school-sponsored activity, event or function or on school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by any school group;
- C. Off school grounds at a school-sponsored activity, event or function;
- D. In transit to or from school;
- E. On a school bus;
- F. Off school grounds at any time for a violation (1) that involves assault upon, or damage or destruction to the property of a teacher, administrator or other school employee, or (2) that poses a danger to the security and well-being of teachers, administrators other school employees, or that would put a reasonable such person in fear of harm to personal security and well-being, or (3) that brings the District into ill repute (such as vandalism or the writing of graffiti that identifies the District or a school within the District), or (4) that impacts the educational environment.

Students are responsible for all contents of book bags and items in possession or on their person, whether known or unknown. Students are also responsible for all items they bring on school grounds, including the contents in vehicles, whether known or unknown.

Conduct Violations

- 1. **Academic Misconduct** - A student shall not cheat or plagiarize on any tests or other school assignments. Further, a student shall not present work as their own when it is not a product of their own personal thoughts, understanding and effort.
- 2. **Alcohol** - A student shall not use, possess, sell, distribute, purchase, receive, conceal, or be under the influence of alcohol or a product containing a substance that can provide an intoxicating or mood-altering effect (Refer to Drug Prevention Policy).
- 3. **Alternative Substance Delivery Device/Inhalants** - A student shall not use, possess, sell, distribute, purchase, receive, conceal, or be under the influence of substances in an electronic delivery device or other substitute forms of nicotine or chemicals which release toxic vapors, including, but not limited to vapes, vaporizer instruments, electronic cigarettes or cartridges.
- 4. **Arson** - A student shall not engage in the deliberate act of setting fire or attempting to set fire to school or personal property that has the potential to endanger students and school staff.
- 5. **Assault** - A student shall not engage in an incident or physical attack that results in serious bodily injury to oneself or others. Serious bodily injury is defined as "A bodily injury that involves substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ or

faculty (18 U.S.C. § 1365(3)(h)). Additionally, a student shall not physically attack another person in a manner that is unexpected and involves one-way physical aggression.

6. **Attendance and Truancy** - A student shall not be absent from any portion or all of regularly scheduled classes or other mandatory activities without school authorization and/or parental consent. Leaving the school campus and presence in unauthorized areas without a pass or permission of authorized school personnel, and repeated tardiness shall be considered a violation of this provision. (Refer to School Attendance Policy Guidelines).
7. **Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation** - A student shall not bully, harass, intimidate or retaliate against other students, school employees, school guests or persons conducting business for the school. Bullying, harassment and intimidation include an intentional written, verbal, electronic or physical act that is exhibited toward another person more than once that causes both mental and/or physical harm and is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive in a way that it creates a hostile environment that interferes with or limits an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's program.
8. **Disruption to School** - A student shall not cause a disturbance or obstruction to the normal operation of this school or any other school in the district.
9. **Dress and Appearance** - A student shall not violate district rules pertaining to dress and appearance. Students shall attend school and present themselves in a manner which is within the bounds of decency and good taste, is clean, not hazardous to their safety or to the safety of others, and which does not detract from the educational environment or cause health risk (Refer to Dress and Appearance Guidelines).
10. **Drugs Other Than Tobacco or Alcohol** - A student shall not use, possess, sell, distribute, purchase, receive, conceal, or be under the influence of drugs, including, but not limited to, marijuana, THC vapes or edibles, counterfeit drugs, look-alike drugs other than tobacco or alcohol.
11. **Explosives/Other Dangerous Substances** - A student shall not have any destructive device, which includes a bomb, a grenade, a rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce and a mine or any similar device. This definition would also include any weapon that will, or that may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and that has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter. Additionally, fireworks or any other substance that could explode are prohibited.
12. **False Alarms/Bomb Threat** - A student shall not make a threat (verbal, written, or electronic) to bomb or use other substances or devices for the purpose of exploding, burning, causing damage to a school building or school property, or to harm students or staff.

13. **Fighting** - A student shall not participate in any incident involving physical violence.
14. **Firearm** - A student shall not have a firearm. A firearm is any weapon which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or any machine gun. This includes firearm components, ammunition, zip guns, starter guns, and flare guns.
15. **Firearm Look-alike** - A student shall not have any item that resembles a firearm, even if it does not have the explosive characteristics of a firearm, but may use a spring loaded device or air pressure by which to propel an object or substance (i.e., toy guns, cap guns, bb guns, pellet guns).
16. **Forgery/Falsification/Misleading School Personnel** - A student shall not forge or falsify in verbal, written or electronic form the name of another person or times, dates, grades, addresses, or any other information.
17. **Gang Paraphernalia** - A student shall not wear, use or possess gang related content or symbolism.
18. **Hazing** - A student shall not engage in any act or plan to act in a way that is intended to initiate students and coerce them into becoming part of a group or activity that has a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person.
19. **Identification** - A student shall not refuse to identify themselves and must promptly, upon request, correctly identify themselves to school authorities.
20. **Inappropriate Behavior/Disrespect** - Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is conducive to the learning environment and educational process and is respectful toward all peers and school personnel. It is recognized that no list of prohibited conduct can specifically encompass every action which may become subject to discipline.
21. **Inappropriate or Discriminatory Language** - A student shall not use profane, vulgar, obscene, racially, religiously or sexually derogatory, or other improper/discriminatory language. Nor shall a student possess vulgar materials or use vulgar, profane or other improper gestures or signs.
22. **Inappropriate Use of Technology** - Students must follow appropriate use of technology policies. It is recognized that no list of prohibited use of technology can specifically encompass every action which may become subject to disciplinary action (Refer to Access to District Technology Resources and/or Information Resources From Personal Communication Devices and Student Education Technology Acceptable Use and Safety).
23. **Insubordination/Violation of School Discipline Procedures** - A student shall not refuse to comply with directives and/or assigned consequences given by school personnel.

24. **Intimidation and Threats** - A student shall not in verbal, written, electronic or any other means, make statements that suggest or indicate physical or emotional harm may come to another person or to an institution. Additionally, a student shall not coerce by any means, another student or any other person to use or make threats of intimidation relating to physical or non-physical aggression/violence.
25. **Knife/Other Dangerous Weapon** - A student shall not have a weapon, device, blade, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury. This violation also includes, but is not limited to having and/or using lighters, mace, and tattoo/piercing equipment.
26. **Other Dangerous Weapon Look-alike** - A student shall not have any item that resembles a destructive device, such as a bomb, a grenade, a rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a mine or any similar device. Additionally, a student shall not have any item that resembles or could be construed as a dangerous weapon, device, blade, instrument, material, or substance,, that is used for causing fear or harm, or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury. This definition would also include any weapon that will, or that may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and that has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter.
27. **Substance Paraphernalia (drug, alcohol and tobacco related)** - A student shall not possess drug, alcohol or tobacco paraphernalia or instruments such as lighters, pipes, roach clips, syringes, pacifiers, hypodermic needles, cocaine spoons or kits, nitrous oxide items/containers, rolling papers, water pipes, bottles, wrappers, and any other items normally or actually used for the packaging, conveyance, dispensation or use of mood-altering substances. Possession of drug paraphernalia will be treated the same as possession of a mood-altering chemical. Addiction to an illegal substance shall not be used as an excuse for a violation.
28. **Physical Aggression** - A student shall not engage in unauthorized physical contact.
29. **Repeat Offenses** - A student shall refrain from repeat violations of the Code of Conduct. This includes multiple violations of the same rule or multiple violations of different rules.
30. **School Bus Violation** - A student shall not interfere with or disrupt the operation of a school bus by activities dangerous to its safe operation including, but not limited to, failing to remain seated, throwing objects out the window or at passengers or at the driver, shouting or other disorderly conduct which can cause physical harm, emotional stress or diversion of the driver's attention. Students shall conduct themselves in a safe and orderly manner and shall not trespass on nearby property while waiting to board the bus and after leaving the bus.

31. **Sexual Misconduct** - A student shall not engage in any sexual misconduct while on school premises, under school authority, or while attending any school-sponsored activities. "Sexual misconduct" includes public indecency, sexting, using sexually harassing comments or behavior and/or having sexual contact with another even with consent.
32. **Theft/Possession of Stolen Property** - A student shall not take, acquire, receive, retain, or possess the property of the school or any other person without authorization.
33. **Tobacco** - A student shall not use, possess, sell, distribute, purchase, receive, or conceal or be under the influence of tobacco, tobacco substitutes (including smokeless tobacco), counterfeit tobacco, or look-alike tobacco.
34. **Unauthorized Sales** - A student shall not sell, buy, offer to sell or buy, or exchange any service or product without prior authorization of the building principal.
35. **Unwelcome Sexual Misconduct** - A student shall not engage in unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other physical or verbal conduct or communication of a sexual nature, including gender-based harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education or work environment (i.e., sexual assault, sexting, pinching, grabbing, suggestive comments, gestures or jokes or pressure to engage in sexual activity).
36. **Vandalism/Damage to School or Personal Property** - A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to or destruction of any school property or property belonging to another person. Disciplinary consequences may include restitution of cost where necessary.
37. **Other Violations** - Other conduct violations not defined in the rules above.

PRESCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Licensure Rule 3301-37-10 (Behavior Management/Discipline) requires that all early childhood centers include methods of discipline that apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted in the following plan. These rules have been implemented in our preschool behavior management/discipline philosophy and guidelines and are part of the building's "positive" intervention plan for all preschool students.

GJPS preschool implements a school-wide PBIS system which follows guidelines and evidenced-based strategies that are aligned with the Early Childhood Pyramid Model. All preschool students will be taught common behavior expectations (**CUBS CAN...** Use kind words and actions, **B**e responsible, **S**tay safe) through shared lesson plans. Lesson plans are revisited after long breaks to reteach and reestablish behavior expectations in the preschool setting. The preschool program has developed an acknowledgement system to reinforce individual students for appropriate behaviors by providing specific feedback directly related to the child's behavior. Class-wide and school-wide incentives are integrated within the preschool program and individual classroom settings. The preschool program will provide opportunities for families to be involved with the CUBS school-wide PBIS system.

GJPS preschool believes that children of preschool age are to be disciplined by using constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques at all times to foster positive self-esteem and to provide a safe environment for all children. Staff follow a general plan that is positive and proactive in preventing behavior problems. Preventive techniques may include, but aren't limited to:

- Positive reinforcement (increasing behavior by adding something to the environment that is perceived as positive to the child)
- Positive phrasing (telling a child what they can do instead of what they can't do; i.e., "We sit on the chair, not on the table.")
- Reflective listening (honoring and labeling a child's emotion; i.e., "It makes you sad when it is time to clean up.")
- Modeling appropriate behavior (modeling desired behavior; i.e., teacher helps a child calm down by demonstrating deep breathing or taking a break)
- Emotional language curriculum (teaching students to put words to their feelings, providing visuals and language to prevent meltdowns, frustrations, etc)
- Interventions addressing a child's behavior may include, but are not limited to:
 - Planned ignoring of undesired behavior (attending to a child doing the correct thing; i.e., "Mary is sitting quietly.")
 - Verbal and nonverbal redirection (redirecting child to desired activity/teaching alternative behavior).
 - Proximity control or touch control (moving closer to a child who is having behavioral difficulty, touching their shoulder to redirect behavior)
 - Limiting choices (limiting child's choices to 2, and following through)
 - Sensory strategies (could include differentiated seating, belly breathing, fidgets, swings, weighted items, taking a break, etc)
 - Natural consequences (temporarily losing a motivator; i.e., child intentionally throws toy, child loses privilege that moment to play with toy)

METHODS OF DISCIPLINE FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are used at all times and include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, problem talking with the child about the situation and praise for appropriate behavior. These discipline methods shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:

- There shall not be cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking and/or biting.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box or a similar cubicle.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family or other verbal abuse.
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep or for toileting accidents.

- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate shame or frighten a child.
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
- Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.
- The early childhood staff shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

STUDENT DRESS & APPEARANCE

All Gahanna schools are concerned for the health, safety and general well-being of each student in establishing dress/appearance guidelines. It is our goal to create an environment where every student can express themselves in a safe and appropriate manner. Therefore, we reserve the right to restrict or require dress, accessories, and/or other aspects of appearance that are necessary for safe and productive school operations. Consistent enforcement of the dress code is the responsibility of staff and administration and should be applied in a manner that does not discriminate against, marginalize, or oppress any student based on race, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, household income, or body type.

It is desired that these dress guidelines will assist students in making appropriate choices that reflect their pride in themselves and in their school. The following dress/appearance guidelines are in place to promote a common understanding and cooperation among students, parents/guardians, and schools.

Dress and Appearance Guidelines:

1. Students must wear clothing appropriate for school. This includes, but is not limited to shirts, pants, jeans, shorts, skirts, dresses, rompers, sweatpants, leggings, pajama bottoms, etc. Clothing must fully cover private areas with opaque fabric.
 - Clothing or accessories that advertise alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs; contain gang-related symbolism; are suggestive, offensive, or profane; have sexual connotations; promote, put down, insult, threaten, or harass others based upon gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or disabilities; create a hostile, intimidating, harassing, or offensive learning environment are unacceptable and cannot be worn.
 - Undergarments alone are not considered sufficient clothing and must be covered.
 - Swimwear alone is not considered sufficient clothing.
2. Footwear must be worn at all times. Footwear that may be harmful to the flooring or present a safety concern may not be worn in the building (examples include, but are not limited to shoes with wheels and athletic cleats).
3. Students may wear headwear as long as their face and ears are visible and no students' sight is obstructed. Allowable headwear includes, but is not limited to hats, durags, and hoods on sweatshirts. Religious and cultural headwear may be worn.
4. When activated to increase safety and mitigate the risk of exposure, policy *8450.01 Protective Facial Coverings During Pandemic/Epidemic Events* will require face coverings of students unless they are unable to do so for health or developmental reasons.

Administrators reserve the right to adjust the enforcement of the dress code when appropriate for specific school events and special activities.

Violations of the dress guidelines may result in the following actions:

- The student will be asked to correct any violation of the dress guidelines. If the violation is not corrected at school, the parents/guardians will then be contacted to assist in correcting the violation.
 - Dress code violations will be addressed in private and will not call unnecessary attention to the student.
- At the discretion of the administration, students in violation of the dress/appearance guidelines may be subject to disciplinary action.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE & PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICE ACCESS POLICY

Students must follow the district Acceptable Use Policy which can be found [here](#).

In accordance with the policy above, the following activities are not permitted. Students who engage in these activities are subject to disciplinary action and loss of privileges. No list of prohibited technology use can encompass every action which may be a violation of school rules, therefore students and families should read the complete policy above. Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Bypassing, disabling, or avoiding district web filters.
- Bypassing, disabling, or avoiding classroom monitoring and control software.
- Unenrolling or otherwise modifying software or hardware of district devices to avoid filters or controls.
- Disassembling, intentionally damaging, or removing components from district devices.
- Logging into accounts that belong to someone else.

Student use of the district's networks and systems must follow the policies found [here](#).

Student use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) must follow the policies found [here](#).

Before using AI on any school work, the student must check the expectations for the specific assignment by:

- Looking for specific instructions for AI use in the course materials.
- Asking the teacher if AI use is allowed for the assignment.
- Only using AI tools that have been approved.

Misuse of AI may be considered a violation of the code of conduct, as outlined in the student handbook, and will be handled as such. This includes using AI outside of teacher defined uses.

It is expected that academic activities that take place within the school and involve the use of an electronic device will utilize a district device. Personal devices are not to be used in place of school devices in the classroom, but can be used for special projects and circumstances as approved by the

building principal. Personal devices may be connected to the network when appropriate and in accordance with the policy above.

All students are expected to annually review and acknowledge notice of district policies pertaining to use of technology and personal devices at registration.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Attendance as a preschool peer model or a student with special needs is not compulsory and therefore, cannot be required for a child 3 through 5 years of age. When a child is enrolled in preschool, it is at the discretion of the parents or guardians. At any time, parents/guardians can decide to withdraw a student from school and discontinue the child's participation in the preschool program. **Preschool peers should refer to the Tuition Agreement regarding the terms of attendance and withdrawal.**

It is important to note that regular attendance enables children to receive the maximum benefits of participating in the preschool program. Late arrival/early dismissal and/or irregular attendance prohibit children from participation in all aspects of the preschool curriculum. Absences will be documented for preschool students.

Peer model tuition will not be prorated/refunded if the parent elects to send a child to school less than five days/week.

Call-Ins/Notification of Absences

It is very important that both the school district and parents/guardians know where students are at all times. The school and the parent/guardian need to work together to keep each other informed when students are not in school.

- A. The parents/guardians should make every effort possible to notify the school in ALL cases of student absence. Calls should be made to the school office between the hours of 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM.
- B. When possible, the parents/guardians should notify the school in advance of an absence. (e.g. A phone call or a note from a parents/guardians on Wednesday to notify the school of an absence on Friday)
- C. If a student is absent, and no notification was received from the parent/guardian, the school will attempt to contact the parents/guardians. If no contact is made, an explanation from the parents/guardians will be necessary.
- D. If a student is absent for 3 consecutive school days, the teacher will contact the parents/guardians and a plan will be developed to address habitual absences.

WITHDRAWAL

When withdrawing from GJPS, parents or guardians must notify the preschool secretary to ensure the withdrawal process is completed (i.e. tuition paid (peers), preschool materials are returned in satisfactory condition and the end of service documentation can be completed for students with disabilities.

STUDENT HEALTH INFORMATION

A part-time Registered Nurse is assigned to the preschool locations. There are also clinic-office assistants available during school hours to take care of ill students, minor injuries and administration of specific medications. If your child is complaining of being sick in the morning, please take their temperature before sending them to school. If the child is vomiting, has diarrhea or has a temperature of 100 degrees F or greater, the child must stay home from school until they are fever-free, vomit free or diarrhea free (without the use of medication) for 24 hours.

Gahanna-Jefferson students are excluded from school in accordance with the recommendations from the Ohio Department of Health. The Ohio Department of Health's Communicable Disease Chart can be viewed at: <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/file.asp?id=1730&type=application/pdf>

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

The Ohio Department of Education requires that we maintain a Child's Medical Statement (immunization records) on file. This form must be provided no later than 30 days after the date of enrollment in preschool. Please note: your child may not be due for a medical evaluation during this time period; however, the forms still need to be completed by your child's physician based on the most recent exam date. Throughout the year, these forms will expire on the exam date. We will notify you prior to that time indicating that new forms will be required. At the beginning of each preschool year, new forms will be sent home so that you may have them completed by your physician and returned to school. These forms and deadlines are mandated by the State. Peer models may be excluded from GJPS preschool if forms are not returned.

MEDICATIONS

State Licensed Health Professional Authorization

Before any prescribed medication (i.e., a drug) or treatment may be administered to any student during school hours, the Board shall require a written statement from a licensed health professional authorized to prescribe drugs ("prescriber") accompanied by the written authorization of the parent (see form 5330 F1).

In accordance with ORC 3313.713, the following information must be included on the prescriber's authorization (see form 5330 F1):

- A. name and address of student;
- B. school and class in which student is enrolled;
- C. name of the medication and the dosage to be administered;
- D. times or intervals at which each dose of the medication is to be administered;
- E. date the administration of the medication is to begin;
- F. date the administration of the medication is to cease;
- G. any severe adverse reactions should be reported to the prescriber and one or more phone numbers at which the prescriber can be reached in an emergency;
- H. special instruction for administration of the medication, including sterile conditions and storage.

Over-the-Counter Medication

Before any over-the-counter medication or treatment may be administered, the Board shall require the prior written consent of the parent along with a waiver of any liability of the District for the administration of the medication (see Form 5330 F1a and Form 5330 F1b). These documents shall be kept in the office of the clinic and made available to the persons designated by this policy as authorized to administer medication or treatment. A copy of the parent's written request and authorization and the prescriber's written statement must be given, by the next school day following the District's receipt of the documents, to the person authorized to administer drugs to the student for whom the authorization and statement have been received. No student is allowed to provide or sell any type of over-the-counter medication to another student. Violations of this rule will be considered violations of Policy 5530 - Drug Prevention and of the Student Code of Conduct/Discipline Code.

Prescription Medication

For prescription drugs, only medication in its original container; labeled with the date, if a prescription; the student's name; and exact dosage will be administered. Over-the-counter drugs must be provided and maintained in the original manufacturer's packaging. The Superintendent shall determine a location in each building where the medications to be administered under this policy shall be stored, which shall be a locked storage place, unless the medications require refrigeration in which case they shall be stored in a refrigerator in a place not commonly used by students, and unless the medication to be administered is seizure or diabetes medication, which may be kept in an easily accessible location as determined by the Principal pursuant to this Policy and/or Policy 5336.

Parents may administer medication or treatment, with the exception of diabetes care covered under Policy 5336 but only in the presence of a designated school employee.

Additionally, students may administer medication or treatment to themselves, if authorized in writing by their parents and a licensed health professional authorized to prescribe drugs but only in the presence of a designated school employee with the exception of students authorized to attend to their diabetes care and management pursuant to Policy 5336.

Possession and Use of Asthma Inhalers

However, students shall be permitted to carry and use, as necessary, an asthma inhaler, provided the student has prior written permission from the student's parent and physician, and has submitted Form 5330 F3 - Authorization for the Possession and Use of Asthma Inhalers/Other Emergency Medication(s) to the principal and any school nurse assigned to the building.

Epinephrine Autoinjector

Additionally, students shall be permitted to carry and use, as necessary, an epinephrine autoinjector to treat anaphylaxis, provided the student has prior written approval from the prescriber of the medication and the student's parent/guardian if the student is a minor, and has submitted written approval (Form 5330 F4 - Authorization for the Possession and Use of Epinephrine Autoinjector (epi-pen)) to the principal and any school nurse assigned to the building. The parent/guardian or the student shall provide a backup dose of the medication to the principal or school nurse. This permission shall extend

to any activity, event, or program sponsored by the school or in which the school participates. In the event epinephrine is administered by the student or a school employee at school or at any of the covered events, a school employee shall immediately request assistance from an emergency medical service provider (911). Students with diabetes authorized to attend to their diabetes care and management may do so in accordance with Policy 5336.

Seizure Medications

Students may possess a drug prescribed to the student to prevent the onset of a seizure or to alleviate the symptoms of a seizure, provided that the student has prior written approval from the student's physician, and if the student is a minor, the written approval of the student's parent or guardian (Form 5330 F5 - Authorization for the Possession and Use of Seizure Medications). Copies of the written approvals must be provided to the Principal and any school nurse assigned to the building. This permission shall extend to any activity, event, or program sponsored by the school or in which the school participates.

Students shall be permitted to possess and self-administer over-the-counter topical sunscreen products while on school property or at a school-sponsored event provided the student has submitted prior written approval of their parent/guardian to the principal. (See Form 5330 F1a or Form 5330 F1b)

With the exception of diabetes care covered under Policy 5336, only employees of the Board who are licensed health professionals, or who have completed a drug administration training program conducted by a licensed health professional and are designated by the Board, may administer prescription drugs to students in school.

With the exception of diabetes care covered under Policy 5336, provided they have completed the requisite training, the following staff are authorized to administer prescription and over-the-counter medication and treatment to students:

- A. Principal
- B. Teacher
- C. School nurse
- D. Building secretary
- E. Aide
- F. Others as designated by the student's IEP and/or 504 plan
- G. Other authorized employees

Individuals who administer medications designed to prevent the onset of seizures or alleviate the symptoms of a seizure will receive training regarding the circumstances under which the drug is to be administered to the student and how it should be administered. They will also receive a copy of the written approval issued by the student's physician.

No employee will be required to administer a drug to a student if the employee objects, on the basis of religious convictions, to administering the drug.

Students who may require administration of an emergency medication may have such medication in their possession upon written authorization of their parent(s) or such medication, upon being identified as aforementioned, may be stored in the office and administered in accord with this policy and Policy 5336.

Students who are experiencing an apparent opioid-related drug overdose may be administered Naloxone ("Narcan") by the school nurse, or a trained school employee, volunteer, or contractor, to a student or other individual on school grounds in accordance with Board policy and AG 5330.05. Emergency services will be contacted as soon as is practicable. A designated staff member will also promptly notify the student's parent/guardian.

All dental disease prevention programs sponsored by the Ohio Department of Health and administered by school employees, parents, volunteers, employees of local health districts, or employees of the Ohio Department of Health which utilize prescription drugs for the prevention of dental disease and which are conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Ohio Department of Health are exempt from all requirements of this policy.

BATHROOMS AND DIAPERING

Typically developing peers must be toilet trained in order to attend as a peer model at GJPS preschool. Our students will have access to the bathroom throughout the school day and classes will take bathroom breaks at least once a day at a scheduled time. Students needing to use the restroom outside of the scheduled classroom bathroom break will be taken to the bathroom by a staff member as needed. If a peer has 3 or more accidents within a short time frame, the coordinator and teacher will address the concern with the parents/guardians to develop a plan.

Students on an IEP cannot be prevented from coming to school if they are not toilet trained. School staff will provide the student with assistance deemed appropriate and necessary. If the child is in diapers, staff will follow ODJFS diapering procedures to regularly change their diaper at least once per day (more if the diaper is soiled). All staff will be trained yearly on the ODJFS diapering procedures. Parents/Guardians are responsible for providing the school with diapers and wipes. We ask that all students be sent with a change of clothes in a Ziploc bag with their name on it. If a child needs a change of clothes (whether it is due to a toilet accident, vomit, blood, etc), we will use their extra set of clothes first. If a child does not have an extra set, we have donated clothes that can be used.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SNACKS IN THE CLASSROOM

If your student is in a building/classroom that allows daily, individual snacks, your student's snacks must meet allergy restrictions for all students in the class. Additionally, all snacks must be nut free. This will be monitored by teachers. A letter will be sent to parents at the start of the school year with a list of safe snacks for that class/year. Teachers will plan ahead for community trips, field trips and class-wide activities or meals and will follow all allergy restrictions in order to allow all students to participate. The annual Emergency Medical Authorization (EMA) update must be completed in order for school personnel to accurately develop a safe snack list for your student's classroom.

HOLIDAY/CLASSROOM PARTIES

Any food items provided during *classroom-wide* parties and holiday celebrations must be chosen from the safe snack list provided by the school, however, non-food items are encouraged for these celebrations. Additionally, all food items must be nut free. The annual Emergency Medical Authorization (EMA) update must be completed in order for school personnel to accurately develop a safe snack list for your student's classroom.

BIRTHDAYS

Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools promotes good nutrition in school as one way for our students to receive a quality education and build healthy habits for life. Due to a rise in the number of severe food allergies that impact our students, students are not permitted to bring in any food treats as part of a *birthday* celebration.

Suggested alternatives to food treats include:

- Party favors such as erasers, pencils, stickers, bracelets, keychains, etc.
- Parent/Guardian or guest visiting the classroom and reading a book to the students
- Donating an item to the classroom such as a book, game, plant, craft, etc.
- Providing an item classmates can sign such as a t-shirt, tote bag, autograph book, etc.
- Planning and having the students do an activity such as a craft, dance party, game, etc.

BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS

Invitations to private parties **MAY NOT** be distributed at school unless the entire class is invited. This rule is enforced to protect the feelings of all students.

WELLNESS POLICY

As required by law, the Board of Education established a wellness policy for the Gahanna-Jefferson School District as a part of a comprehensive wellness initiative.

The Board recognizes that good nutrition and regular physical activity affect the health and well-being of the District's students. Furthermore, research suggests that there is a positive correlation between a student's health and well-being and their ability to learn. Moreover, schools can play an important role in the developmental process by which students establish their health and nutrition habits by providing nutritious meals and snacks through the schools' meal programs, by supporting the development of good eating habits, and by promoting increased physical activity both in and out of school.

Please read the full Wellness policy [here](#).

FERPA DIRECTORY INFORMATION NOTIFICATION (Related to Student Records Policy 8330)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents/guardians and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the district/school receives a request for access.

Parents/Guardians or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents/Guardians or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend their child's or their education record should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest must be set forth in the school's or school district's annual notification for FERPA rights. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

4. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. [NOTE: FERPA

requires a school or school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request or the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student.]

5. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents/Guardians and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents/guardians or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(3) are met. (§ 99.31(a)(1))
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of § 99.34. (§ 99.31(a)(2))
- To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency (SEA) in the parent or eligible student's State. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of § 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf, if applicable requirements are met. (§§ 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§ 99.31(a)(4))

- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to § 99.38. (§ 99.31(a)(5))
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction, if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(6))
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§ 99.31(a)(7))
- To parents/guardians of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§ 99.31(a)(8))
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to § 99.36. (§ 99.31(a)(10))
- Information the school has designated as "directory information" if applicable requirements under § 99.37 are met. (§ 99.31(a)(11))
- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L))
- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(K))

If you do not want Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools to disclose any or all of the types of information designated below as directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the Gahanna-Jefferson Local Schools in writing by September 15th. Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Date of graduation
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The Board of Education recognizes and values parents/guardians and families as children's first teachers and decision-makers in education. The Board believes that student learning is more likely to occur when there is an effective partnership between the school and the student's parents/guardians and family. Such a partnership between the home and school and greater involvement of parents/guardians and family members in the education of their children generally result in higher academic achievement, improved student behavior, and reduced absenteeism.

The Board establishes objectives aligned to the following areas to encourage meaningful parent and family engagement: Relationships with Families, Effective Communication, Volunteer Opportunities, Learning at Home, Engaging Families in Decision Making and Advocacy, and Collaborating with the Community.

Please read the full Parent and Family Engagement policy [here](#).

MANDATED REPORTING

School employees are required by law to report any suspicion of abuse and/or neglect.

STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Our district has adopted the "I Love U Guys" Foundation's **Standard Response Protocol** (SRP) as outlined in the above graphic. Students and staff continue to train, practice, and drill the protocol. The Standard Response Protocol (SRP) is based on an all hazards approach as opposed to individual scenarios. There are five specific actions that can be performed during an incident: **Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter**.

SAFETY DRILLS

Beginning no later than the tenth day of school, rapid dismissal (fire) drills will be conducted at least six times, and in accordance with the local fire marshal. Tornado drills must be conducted once per month, while school is in session, between April 1- July 31. Schools must also conduct safety drills at least three times during the school year. Students and staff participate in regularly scheduled safety exercises that include tornado drills, fire drills, rapid dismissal drills, and lockdown drills. Our schools also complete annual Emergency Management Tests which include full scale, functional, and tabletop exercises in concert with local first responders. This includes active assailant and armed intruder training exercises.

SAFE FIREARM STORAGE - LETTER FROM SUPERINTENDENT

Dear GJPS Families:

All students and members of our school communities deserve to feel safe, welcomed, and included. It is on all of us to work together to prevent firearm violence and to avoid the harm and tragedy that shootings of any kind can cause in the spaces in which we live, learn, work, and play.

Safe firearm storage is one of many preventative actions that you can take in keeping our school community and school buildings and grounds safe. When firearms are stored safely, it can help prevent them from getting into the hands of children and teens, who may use them to, intentionally or unintentionally, harm themselves or others. Safe storage can go a long way in preventing lives from being lost or permanently altered. If you have firearms in your home or if your child spends time in a space where firearms are present, there are important steps that can be taken to keep firearms secured and out of reach of unintended users.

Firearm-related injuries and deaths are a public health crisis that communities across the nation face every day:

- Since 2018, there have been more than 100 school shooting incidents per year in our country and those numbers have steadily increased.¹
- Approximately three-quarters of perpetrators in school-based active shooter situations acquired their firearm from the home of a parent or close relative.² This illustrates the close connection between your role as families, caregivers, and guardians and the role of Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools in keeping students safe while on school grounds.
- However, this issue goes beyond school-based active shooter situations and includes a variety of firearm injury types, including interpersonal violence, suicide, and unintentional fatal and nonfatal firearm injuries.³

Safe firearm storage can help prevent and minimize the risk of firearm-related deaths and injuries. Everyone, both firearm owners and non-owners, has a role to play in building awareness of safe, responsible firearm storage. Below are simple, highly effective practices that can help to reduce firearm-related incidents in our community and help protect our kids. In addition to these practices, it is important to also engage children and adolescents in conversations about the dangers associated with using firearms and what to do and not do in the event they access a firearm, to prevent fatal or non-fatal injuries.

- **Safely Store Firearms:** Store firearms—always unloaded—in a tamper proof locked cabinet, box, safe, firearm vault, or storage case that children or other unauthorized adults cannot access.
- **Safely Store Ammunition:** Store ammunition in a separate, tamper-proof locked cabinet, safe, firearm vault, or storage case that children or other unauthorized adults cannot access.
- **Secure Firearms:** Use trigger locks or cable locks to prevent a firearm from firing. (More information can be found on the [Safe Firearm Storage Fact Sheet](#), developed by the U.S. Department of Justice.)
 - Trigger locks use a mechanism that clamps down around the trigger or trigger housing to prevent it from being pressed (Note: trigger locks should not be installed on loaded firearms).
 - In a cable lock, a cable is threaded through the barrel or action of a firearm to prevent it from firing.

Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools remains committed to helping ensure the safety of our students and school community. We can all work together to promote awareness about how we can protect our children and our whole school communities by safely storing firearms and prevent tragedies from ever occurring. Thank you for being a partner in these efforts, and for helping reduce firearm-related injury and deaths in our community.

Sincerely,



Tracey R. Deagle, Ph.D.
Superintendent

This letter was created by the REMS TA Center, which is operated by Synergy Enterprises, Inc. under Contract #GS-00F-115CA awarded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Supportive Schools. All materials created or disseminated by the REMS TA Center, including the contents of this letter, should not be presumed to reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education or to imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.

¹ Riedman, D. (2023). K-12 School Shooting Database. <https://k12ssdb.org/all-shootings>

² National Threat Assessment Center. (2019). Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence. U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security. <http://bit.ly/3SfmSgw>

³ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. (September 19, 2023). Fast Facts: Firearm Violence and Injury Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/firearms/fastfact.html>

SECURITY CAMERAS

Video surveillance may be in use in any interior or exterior area of the school facility where privacy is not expected.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The Board of Education recognizes that the privacy of students or their belongings may not be violated by unreasonable search and seizure and directs that no student be searched without reasonable suspicion or in an unreasonable manner.

The Board acknowledges the need for in-school storage of student possessions and shall provide storage places, including desks and lockers, for that purpose. Such spaces remain the property of the Board and, in accordance with law, may be the subject of random search. Where locks are provided for such places, students may lock them against incursion by other students, but in no such places shall

students have such an expectation of privacy as to prevent examination by a school official. The Board directs the school principals to conduct a routine inspection at least annually of all such storage places.

School authorities are charged with the responsibility of safeguarding the safety and well-being of the students in their care. In the discharge of that responsibility, school authorities may search the person or property, including vehicles, of a student, with or without the student's consent, whenever they reasonably suspect that the search is required to discover evidence of a violation of law or of school rules. The extent of the search will be governed by the seriousness of the alleged infraction and the student's age.

This authorization to search shall also apply to all situations in which the student is under the jurisdiction of the Board.

Administrators are permitted to conduct a random search of any student's locker and its contents at any time, providing proper notice has been posted in the locker areas of each building.

Search of a student's person or intimate personal belongings shall be conducted by a person of the same sex, in the presence of a second staff member who, if requested by the student would be the same sex as the student being searched.

However, in exceptional circumstances when the health or safety of the student or of others is immediately threatened a search may be conducted by a person of the opposite sex in the presence of a second staff member of either sex.

Administrators are authorized to arrange for the use of a breath-test instrument for the purpose of determining if a student has consumed an alcoholic beverage. It is not necessary for the test to determine blood-alcohol level, since the Board has established a zero tolerance for alcohol use.

The Board also authorizes the use of canines, trained in detecting the presence of drugs or devices, when the Superintendent has reasonable suspicion that illegal drugs or devices may be present in a school. This means of detection shall be used only to determine the presence of drugs in locker areas and other places on school property where such substances could be concealed. Canine detection must be conducted in collaboration with law enforcement authorities or with organizations certified in canine detection and is not to be used to search individual students unless a warrant has been obtained prior to the search.

Except as provided below, a request for the search of a student or a student's possessions will be directed to the principal who shall seek the freely offered consent of the student to the inspection. Whenever possible, a search will be conducted by the principal in the presence of the student and a staff member other than the principal. A search prompted by the reasonable belief that health and safety are immediately threatened will be conducted with as much speed and dispatch as may be required to protect persons and property.

The principal shall be responsible for the prompt recording in writing of each student search, including the reasons for the search; information received that established the need for the search and the name of the informant, if any; the persons present when the search was conducted; any substances or objects found; and the disposition made of them. The principal shall be responsible for the custody, control, and disposition of any illegal or dangerous substance or object taken from a student.

The Superintendent shall prepare administrative guidelines to implement this policy.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION & SUPPORTS AND LIMITED USE OF RESTRAINT & SECLUSION

All Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools utilize the Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports (PBIS) framework to ensure we are maximizing the selection and use of evidence-based prevention and intervention practices along a multi-tiered continuum that supports the academic, social emotional and behavioral competence of all students. PBIS shall serve as the foundation for the creation of a learning environment with an emphasis placed on promoting positive interventions and solutions to potential crises. If a student's behavior, however, presents a threat of immediate physical harm to the student or others, staff may, as a last resort (i.e., there is no other safe and effective intervention available) and in accordance with the terms of this policy, use approved physical restraint or seclusion to maintain a safe environment.

All physical restraint and seclusion shall only be done in accordance with this policy, which is based on the standards adopted by the State Board of Education regarding the use of student restraint and seclusion.

The Superintendent shall monitor the implementation of A.C. 3301-35-15 and this policy, and annually conduct a review of A.C. 3301-35-15 and this policy related to the use of PBIS, physical restraint, and seclusion. Additionally, the administration will annually notify parents/guardians of the District's policy and procedures related to the requirements of PBIS, physical restraint, and seclusion, including the following complaint process.

Any parent or guardian of a child enrolled in school in the District may submit a written complaint to the Superintendent regarding an incident of restraint or seclusion. The Superintendent shall investigate each written complaint and respond in writing to the parent's complaint within thirty (30) days of receipt of the complaint. The Superintendent will make reasonable efforts to have an in-person follow-up meeting with the parent.

If the parent or guardian is not satisfied with the response provided, the parent may request to meet with the Board in executive session to address the situation.

A parent may also file a complaint with local law enforcement, the county department of job and family services, or the office of integrated student support within the Ohio Department of Education. The procedures and timeline for filing a complaint with the Ohio Department of Education are outlined in A.C. 3301-35-15(L).

A parent or guardian of a child with a disability (as defined by R.C. 3323.01) may file a complaint with the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Exceptional Children, in accordance with the complaint procedures available under A.C. 3301-51-05(K)(4)-(6).

Please read the full Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports and Limited Use of Restraint & Seclusion policy [here](#).

ANTI-HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Board of Education to maintain an education and work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. This commitment applies to all School District operations, programs, and activities. All students, administrators, teachers, staff, and all other school personnel share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging, and reporting any form of unlawful harassment. This policy applies to unlawful conduct occurring on school property, or at another location if such conduct occurs during an activity sponsored by the Board.

The Board will vigorously enforce its prohibition against discriminatory harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), disability, age (except as authorized by law), religion, ancestry, or genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes") that are protected by Federal civil rights laws (hereinafter referred to as unlawful harassment), and encourages those within the School District community as well as Third Parties, who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify such problems. The Board will investigate all allegations of unlawful harassment and in those cases where unlawful harassment is substantiated, the Board will take immediate steps to end the harassment, prevent its reoccurrence, and remedy its effects. Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

The District will offer counseling services to any person found to have been subjected to unlawful harassment, and, where appropriate, the person(s) who committed the unlawful harassment.

Other Violations of the Anti-Harassment Policy

The Board will also take immediate steps to impose disciplinary action on individuals engaging in any of the following prohibited acts:

- A. Retaliating against a person who has made a report or filed a complaint alleging unlawful harassment, or who has participated as a witness in a harassment investigation.
- B. Filing a malicious or knowingly false report or complaint of unlawful harassment.
- C. Disregarding, failing to investigate adequately, or delaying investigation of allegations of unlawful harassment, when responsibility for reporting and/or investigating harassment charges comprises part of one's supervisory duties.

Definitions

Words used in this policy shall have those meanings defined herein; words not defined herein shall be construed according to their plain and ordinary meanings.

Complainant is the individual who alleges, or is alleged, to have been subjected to unlawful harassment, regardless of whether the person files a formal complaint or is pursuing an informal resolution to the alleged harassment.

Respondent is the individual who has been alleged to have engaged in unlawful harassment, regardless of whether the Reporting Party files a formal complaint or is seeking an informal resolution to the alleged harassment.

School District community means students and Board employees (i.e., administrators, and professional and classified staff), as well as Board members, agents, volunteers, contractors, or other persons subject to the control and supervision of the Board.

Third Parties include, but are not limited to, guests and/or visitors on School District property (e.g., visiting speakers, participants on opposing athletic teams, parents/guardians), vendors doing business with, or seeking to do business with, the Board, and other individuals who come in contact with members of the School District community at school-related events/activities (whether on or off District property).

Day(s): Unless expressly stated otherwise, the term “day” or “days” as used in this policy means business day(s) (i.e., a day(s) that the Board office is open for normal operating hours, Monday – Friday, excluding State-recognized holidays).

Bullying

Bullying rises to the level of unlawful harassment when one (1) or more persons systematically and chronically inflict physical hurt or psychological distress on one (1) or more students or employees and that bullying is based upon one (1) or more Protected Classes, that is, characteristics that are protected by Federal civil rights laws. It is defined as any unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school or work performance or participation; and may involve:

- A. Teasing;
- B. Threats;
- C. Intimidation;
- D. Stalking;
- E. cyberstalking;
- F. Cyberbullying;
- G. physical violence;
- H. Theft;
- I. sexual, religious, or racial harassment;
- J. public humiliation; or
- K. destruction of property.

Harassment

Harassment means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of technology, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

- A. places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to their person or damage to their property;
- B. has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits, or an employee's work performance; or
- C. has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

Sexual Harassment

For purposes of this policy and consistent with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, "sexual harassment" is defined as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- A. Submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or status in a class, educational program, or activity.
- B. Submission or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or educational decisions affecting such individual.
- C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work or educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, and/or learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity.

Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of any gender against a person of the same or another gender.

Sexual Harassment covered by Policy 2266 - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex Education Programs or Activities is not included in this policy. Allegations of such conduct shall be addressed solely by Policy 2266.

Prohibited acts that constitute sexual harassment under this policy may take a variety of forms.

Examples of the kinds of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- A. Unwelcome sexual propositions, invitations, solicitations, and flirtations.
- B. Unwanted physical and/or sexual contact.
- C. Threats or insinuations that a person's employment, wages, academic grade, promotion, classroom work or assignments, academic status, participation in athletics or extra-curricular programs, activities, or events, or other conditions of employment or education may be adversely affected by not submitting to sexual advances.
- D. Unwelcome verbal expressions of a sexual nature, including graphic sexual commentaries about a person's body, dress, appearance, or sexual activities; the unwelcome use of sexually degrading language, profanity, jokes or innuendoes; unwelcome suggestive or insulting sounds or whistles; obscene telephone calls.

- E. Sexually suggestive objects, pictures, graffiti, videos, posters, audio recordings or literature, placed in the work or educational environment, that may reasonably embarrass or offend individuals.
- F. Unwelcome and inappropriate touching, patting, or pinching; obscene gestures.
- G. Asking about, or telling about, sexual fantasies, sexual preferences, or sexual activities.
- H. Speculations about a person's sexual activities or sexual history, or remarks about one's own sexual activities or sexual history.
- I. Giving unwelcome personal gifts such as lingerie that suggests the desire for a romantic relationship.
- J. Leering or staring at someone in a sexual way, such as staring at a person's breasts, buttocks, or groin.
- K. A pattern of conduct, which can be subtle in nature, that has sexual overtones and is intended to create or has the effect of creating discomfort and/or humiliation to another.
- L. Inappropriate boundary invasions by a District employee or other adult member of the School District community into a student's personal space and personal life.
- M. Verbal, nonverbal or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping that does not involve conduct of a sexual nature.

Not all behavior with sexual connotations constitutes unlawful sexual harassment. Sex-based or gender-based conduct must be sufficiently severe, pervasive, and persistent such that it adversely affects, limits, or denies an individual's employment or education, or such that it creates a hostile or abusive employment or educational environment, or such that it is intended to, or has the effect of, denying or limiting a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program or activities.

Race/Color Harassment

Prohibited racial harassment occurs when unwelcome physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct is based upon an individual's race or color and when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work or educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, and/or learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity. Such harassment may occur where conduct is directed at the characteristics of a person's race or color, such as racial slurs, nicknames implying stereotypes, epithets, and/or negative references relative to racial customs.

Religious (Creed) Harassment

Prohibited religious harassment occurs when unwelcome physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct is based upon an individual's religion or creed and when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work or educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working and/or learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity. Such harassment may occur where conduct is directed at the characteristics of a person's religious tradition, clothing, or surnames, and/or involves religious slurs.

National Origin/Ancestry Harassment

Prohibited national origin/ancestry harassment occurs when unwelcome physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct is based upon an individual's national origin or ancestry and when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work or educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working and/or learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity. Such harassment may occur where conduct is directed at the characteristics of a person's national origin or ancestry, such as negative comments regarding customs, manner of speaking, language, surnames, or ethnic slurs.

Disability Harassment

Prohibited disability harassment occurs when unwelcome physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct is based upon an individual's disability and when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work or educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working and/or learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity. Such harassment may occur where conduct is directed at the characteristics of a person's disability, such as negative comments about speech patterns, movement, physical impairments or defects/appearances, or the like.

Anti-Harassment Compliance Officers

The following individual(s) shall serve as the District's Anti-Harassment Compliance Officer(s) (hereinafter, "the Compliance Officer(s)");

Shea Reed - Human Resource Director
614-471-7065
380 Granville Street
Gahanna, OH 43230

Denise Brown - Human Resources Coordinator
614-471-7065
380 Granville Street
Gahanna, OH 43230

Other Designated Administrator
380 Granville Street
Gahanna, OH 43230
614-471-7065

The names, titles, and contact information of these individuals will be published annually on the School District's web site and:

- A. in the parent and staff handbooks;
- B. on each individual school's web site.

The Compliance Officer(s) are responsible for coordinating the District's efforts to comply with applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including the District's duty to address in a prompt and equitable manner any inquiries or complaints regarding harassment.

The Compliance Officer(s) will be available during regular school/work hours to discuss concerns related to unlawful harassment, to assist students, other members of the District community, and third parties who seek support or advice when informing another individual about "unwelcome" conduct, or to intercede informally on behalf of the individual in those instances where concerns have not resulted in the filing of a formal complaint and where all parties are in agreement to participate in an informal process.

Compliance Officers shall accept reports of unlawful harassment directly from any member of the School District community or a Third Party or receive reports that are initially filed with an administrator, supervisor, or other District-level official. Upon receipt of a report of alleged harassment, the Compliance Officer(s) will contact the Complainant and begin either an informal or formal complaint process (depending on the request of the Complainant or the nature of the alleged harassment), or the Compliance Officer(s) will designate a specific individual to conduct such a process. The Compliance Officer(s) will provide a copy of this policy to the Complainant and Respondent. In the case of a formal complaint, the Compliance Officer(s) will prepare recommendations for the Superintendent or will oversee the preparation of such recommendations by a designee. All Board employees must report incidents of harassment that are reported to them to the Compliance Officer within two (2) days of learning of the incident.

Any Board employee who directly observes unlawful harassment is obligated, in accordance with this policy, to report such observations to the Compliance Officer(s) within two (2) days. Additionally, any Board employee who observes an act of unlawful harassment is expected to intervene to stop the harassment, unless circumstances make such an intervention dangerous, in which case the staff member should immediately notify other Board employees and/or local law enforcement officials, as necessary, to stop the harassment. Thereafter, the Compliance Officer(s) or designee must contact the Complainant, if age eighteen (18) or older, or Complainant's parents/guardians if the Complainant is under the age eighteen (18), within two (2) days to advise of the Board's intent to investigate the alleged wrongdoing.

Reports and Complaints of Harassing Conduct

Students and all other members of the School District community along with Third Parties are encouraged to promptly report incidents of harassing conduct to a teacher, administrator, supervisor, or other District official so that the Board may address the conduct before it becomes severe, pervasive, or persistent. Any teacher, administrator, supervisor, or other District employee or official who receives such a report shall file it with the Compliance Officer within two (2) days of receiving the report of harassment.

Members of the School District community and Third Parties, which includes students, or third parties who believe they have been unlawfully harassed are entitled to utilize the Board's complaint process that is set forth below. Initiating a complaint, whether formally or informally, will not adversely affect the Complainant's employment or participation in educational or extra-curricular programs. While there are no time limits for initiating complaints of harassment under this policy, individuals should make every

effort to file a complaint as soon as possible after the conduct occurs while the facts are known and potential witnesses are available.

If, during an investigation of alleged bullying, aggressive behavior and/or harassment in accordance with Policy 5517.01 - Bullying and Other Forms of Aggressive Behavior, the Principal believes that the reported misconduct may have created a hostile work environment and may have constituted unlawful discriminatory harassment based on a Protected Class, the Principal shall report the act of bullying, aggressive behavior and/or harassment to the Compliance Officers who shall investigate the allegation in accordance with this policy. If the alleged harassment involves Sexual Harassment as defined by Policy 2266, the matter will be handled in accordance with the grievance process and procedures outlined in Policy 2266. While the Compliance Officer investigates the allegation, or the matter is being addressed pursuant to Policy 2266, the Principal shall suspend the Policy 5517.01 investigation to await the Compliance Officer's written report or the determination of responsibility pursuant to Policy 2266. The Compliance Officer shall keep the Principal informed of the status of the Policy 5517 investigation and provide the Principal with a copy of the resulting written report. Likewise, the Title IX Coordinator will provide the Principal with the determination of responsibility that results from the Policy 2266 grievance process.

Investigation and Complaint Procedure

Except for Sexual Harassment that is covered by Policy 2266 - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities, any student who believes that they have been subjected to unlawful harassment may seek resolution of the complaint through the procedures described below. The formal complaint process involves an investigation of the Complainant's claims of harassment or retaliation and a process for rendering a decision regarding whether the charges are substantiated.

Due to the sensitivity surrounding complaints of unlawful harassment or retaliation, timelines are flexible for initiating the complaint process; however, individuals should make every effort to file a complaint within thirty (30) days after the conduct occurs while the facts are known and potential witnesses are available. Once the formal complaint process is begun, the investigation will be completed in a timely manner (ordinarily, within fifteen (15) business days of the complaint being received).

The procedures set forth below are not intended to interfere with the rights of a student to pursue a complaint of unlawful harassment or retaliation with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

Informal Complaint Procedure

The goal of the informal complaint procedure is promptly to stop inappropriate behavior and to facilitate resolution through informal means, if possible. The informal complaint procedure is provided as a less formal option for a student who believes they have been unlawfully harassed or retaliated against. This informal procedure is not required as a precursor to the filing of a formal complaint. The informal process is only available in those circumstances where the Complainant and the Respondent mutually agree to participate in it.

Students who believe that they have been unlawfully harassed may initiate their complaint through this informal complaint process, but are not required to do so. The informal process is only available in

those circumstances where the parties (alleged target of harassment and alleged harasser(s)) agree to participate in the informal process.

The Complainant may proceed immediately to the formal complaint process and individuals who seek resolution through the informal procedure may request that the informal process be terminated at any time to move to the formal complaint process.

All complainants involving a District employee, any other adult member of the School District community, or a Third Party and a student will be formally investigated.

As an initial course of action, if a Complainant feels comfortable and safe in doing so, the individual should tell or otherwise inform the Respondent that the alleged harassing conduct is unwelcome and must stop. The Complainant should address the allegedly harassing conduct as soon after it occurs as possible. The Compliance Officers are available to support and counsel individuals when taking this initial step or to intervene on behalf of the Complainant if requested to do so. A Complainant who is uncomfortable or unwilling to directly approach the Respondent about the alleged inappropriate conduct may file an informal or a formal complaint. In addition, with regard to certain types of unlawful harassment, such as sexual harassment, the Compliance Officer may advise against the use of the informal complaint process.

A Complainant may make an informal complaint, either orally or in writing: 1) to a teacher, other employee, or building administrator in the school the student attends; 2) to the Superintendent or other District-level employee; and/or 3) directly to one of the Compliance Officers.

All informal complaints must be reported to one of the Compliance Officers who will either facilitate an informal resolution as described below, or appoint another individual to facilitate an informal resolution.

The Board's informal complaint procedure is designed to provide students who believe they are being unlawfully harassed with a range of options designed to bring about a resolution of their concerns. Depending upon the nature of the complaint and the wishes of the Complainant, informal resolution may involve, but not be limited to, one or more of the following:

- A. Advising the Complainant about how to communicate the unwelcome nature of the behavior to the Respondent.
- B. Distributing a copy of this anti-harassment policy as a reminder to the individuals in the school building or office where the Respondent works or attends.
- C. If both parties agree, the Compliance Officer may arrange and facilitate a meeting or mediation between the Complainant and the Respondent to work out a mutual resolution.

While there are no set time limits within which an informal complaint must be resolved, the Compliance Officer/designee is directed to attempt to resolve all informal complaints within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the informal complaint. If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the informal complaint process, the Complainant may proceed to file a formal complaint. And, as stated above, either party may request that the informal process be terminated at any time to move to the formal complaint process.

Formal Complaint Procedure

If a complaint is not resolved through the informal complaint process, if one of the parties has requested that the informal complaint process be terminated to move to the formal complaint process, or the Complainant, from the outset, elects to file a formal complaint, or the CO determines the allegations are not appropriate for resolution through the informal process, the formal complaint process shall be implemented.

The Complainant may file a formal complaint, either orally or in writing, with a teacher, principal, or other District employee at the student's school, the Compliance Officer, Superintendent, or another District official who works at another school or at the district level. Due to the sensitivity surrounding complaints of unlawful harassment, timelines are flexible for initiating the complaint process; however, individuals should make every effort to file a formal complaint within thirty (30) days after the conduct occurs while the facts are known and potential witnesses are available. If a Complainant informs a teacher, principal, or other District employee at the student's school, Superintendent, or other District official, either orally or in writing, about any complaint of harassment, that employee must report such information to the Compliance Officer within two (2) business days.

Throughout the course of the process, the Compliance Officer should keep the parties reasonably informed of the status of the investigation and the decision-making process.

All formal complaints must include the following information to the extent known: the identity of the Respondent; a detailed description of the facts upon which the complaint is based (i.e., when, where, and what occurred); a list of potential witnesses; and the resolution sought by the Complainant.

If the Complainant is unwilling or unable to provide a written statement including the information set forth above, the Compliance Officer shall ask for such details in an oral interview. Thereafter, the Compliance Officer will prepare a written summary of the oral interview, and the Complainant will be asked to verify the accuracy of the reported charge by signing the document.

Upon receiving a formal complaint, the Compliance Officer will consider whether any action should be taken in the investigatory phase to protect the Complainant from further harassment or retaliation, including, but not limited to, a change of work assignment or schedule for the Complainant and/or the Respondent. In making such a determination, the Compliance Officer should consult the Complainant to assess whether the individual agrees with the proposed action. If the Complainant is unwilling to consent to the proposed change, the Compliance Officer may still take whatever actions deemed appropriate in consultation with the Superintendent.

Within two (2) business days of receiving the complaint, the Compliance Officer/designee will initiate a formal investigation to determine whether the Complainant has been subjected to offensive conduct/harassment/retaliation. The Principal will not conduct an investigation unless directed to do so by the Compliance Officer.

Simultaneously, the Compliance Officer will inform the Respondent that a formal complaint has been received. The Respondent will be informed about the nature of the allegations and provided with a copy of any relevant policies and/or administrative guidelines, including the Board's Anti-Harassment policy. The Respondent must also be informed of the opportunity to submit a written response to the complaint within five (5) business days.

Although certain cases may require additional time, the Compliance Officer/designee will attempt to complete an investigation into the allegations of harassment/retaliation within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the formal complaint. The investigation will include:

- A. interviews with the Complainant;
- B. interviews with the Respondent;
- C. interviews with any other witnesses who may reasonably be expected to have any information relevant to the allegations;
- D. consideration of any documentation or other information presented by the Complainant, Respondent, or any other witness that is reasonably believed to be relevant to the allegations.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Compliance Officer or the designee shall prepare and deliver a written report to the Superintendent that summarizes the evidence gathered during the investigation and provides recommendations based on the evidence and the definition of unlawful harassment as provided in Board policy and State and Federal law as to whether the Complainant has been subjected to unlawful harassment. The Compliance Officer's recommendations must be based upon the totality of the circumstances, including the ages and maturity levels of those involved. In determining if discriminatory harassment or retaliation occurred, a preponderance of evidence standard will be used. The Compliance Officer may consult with the Board's legal counsel before finalizing the report to the Superintendent.

Absent extenuating circumstances, within ten (10) school days of receiving the report of the Compliance Officer/designee, the Superintendent must either issue a written decision regarding whether the complaint of harassment has been substantiated or request further investigation. A copy of the Superintendent's final decision will be delivered to both the Complainant and the Respondent.

If the Superintendent requests additional investigation, the Superintendent must specify the additional information that is to be gathered, and such additional investigation must be completed within ten (10) school days. At the conclusion of the additional investigation, the Superintendent shall issue a written decision as described above.

A Complainant or Respondent who is dissatisfied with the final decision of the Superintendent may appeal through a signed written statement to the Board within five (5) business days of the party's receipt of the Superintendent's decision. The written statement of appeal must be submitted to the Treasurer/CFO.

In an attempt to resolve the complaint, the Board shall meet with the concerned parties and their representatives within twenty (20) business days of the receipt of such an appeal. A copy of the Board's disposition of the appeal shall be sent to each party within ten (10) business days of this meeting. The decision of the Board will be final.

The Board reserves the right to investigate and resolve a complaint or report of unlawful harassment/retaliation regardless of whether the student alleging the unlawful harassment/retaliation pursues the complaint. The Board also reserves the right to have the formal complaint investigation conducted by an external person in accordance with this policy or in such other manner as deemed appropriate by the Board or its designee.

The parties may be represented, at their own cost, at any of the above-described meetings/hearings.

The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights, the filing of charges with local law enforcement, or the filing of a civil action in court. Use of this internal complaint process is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The District will employ all reasonable efforts to protect the rights of the Complainant, the Respondent, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under the terms of this policy and related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law. Confidentiality, however, cannot be guaranteed. Additionally, the Respondent must be provided the Complainant's identity.

During the course of a formal investigation, the Compliance Officer/designee will instruct all members of the School District community and third parties who are interviewed about the importance of maintaining confidentiality. Any individual who is interviewed as part of a harassment investigation is expected not to disclose any information that is learned or provided during the course of the investigation.

Sanctions and Monitoring

The Board shall vigorously enforce its prohibitions against unlawful harassment/retaliation by taking appropriate action reasonably calculated to stop the harassment and prevent further such harassment. While observing the principles of due process, a violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including the discharge of an employee or the suspension/expulsion of a student. All disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with applicable State law and the terms of the relevant collective bargaining agreement(s). When imposing discipline, the Superintendent shall consider the totality of the circumstances involved in the matter, including the ages and maturity levels of those involved. In those cases where unlawful harassment is not substantiated, the Board may consider whether the alleged conduct nevertheless warrants discipline in accordance with other Board policies, consistent with the terms of the relevant collective bargaining agreement(s).

Where the Board becomes aware that a prior remedial action has been taken against a member of the School District community, all subsequent sanctions imposed by the Board and/or Superintendent shall be reasonably calculated to end such conduct, prevent its reoccurrence, and remedy its effects.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who makes a report or files a complaint alleging unlawful harassment/retaliation or participates as a witness in an investigation is prohibited. Neither the Board nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce or interfere with any individual because the person opposed any act or practice made unlawful by any Federal or State civil rights law, or because that individual made a report, formal complaint testified, assisted or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under those laws and/or this

policy, or because that individual exercised, enjoyed, aided or encouraged any other person in the exercise or enjoyment of any right granted or protected by those laws and/or this policy.

Retaliation against a person from making a report of discrimination, filing a formal complaint, or participating in an investigation or meeting is a serious violation of this policy that can result in imposition of disciplinary sanction/consequences and/or other appropriate remedies.

Formal complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the internal complaint process set forth above.

The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution does not constitute retaliation prohibited under this policy.

Allegations Constituting Criminal Conduct: Child Abuse/Sexual Misconduct

State law requires any school teacher or school employee who knows or suspects that a child with a disability under the age of twenty-one (21) or that a child under the age of eighteen (18) has suffered or faces a threat of suffering a physical or mental wound, disability or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of a child to immediately report that knowledge or suspicion to the county children's services agency. If, during the course of a harassment investigation, the Compliance Officer or a designee has reason to believe or suspect that the alleged conduct reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the Complainant, a report of such knowledge must be made in accordance with State law and Board Policy.

State law defines certain contact between a teacher and a student as "sexual battery." If the Compliance Officer or a designee has reason to believe that the Complainant has been the victim of criminal conduct as defined in Ohio's Criminal Code, such knowledge should be immediately reported to local law enforcement.

Any reports made to a county children's services agency or to local law enforcement shall not terminate the Compliance Officer or a designee's obligation and responsibility to continue to investigate a complaint of harassment. While the Compliance Officer or a designee may work cooperatively with outside agencies to conduct concurrent investigations, in no event shall the harassment investigation be inhibited by the involvement of outside agencies without good cause after consultation with the Superintendent.

Allegations Involving Conduct Unbecoming the Teaching Profession/Suspension

The Superintendent will report to the Ohio Department of Education, on forms provided for that purpose, matters of misconduct on the part of licensed professional staff members convicted of sexual battery, and will, in accordance with Policy 8141, suspend such employee from all duties that concern or involve the care, custody, or control of a child during the pendency of any criminal action for which that person has been arrested, summoned and/or indicted in that regard.

Education and Training

In support of this Anti-Harassment Policy, the Board promotes preventative educational measures to create greater awareness of unlawful discriminatory practices. The Superintendent shall provide appropriate information to all members of the School District community related to the implementation

of this policy and shall provide training for District students and staff where appropriate. All training, as well as all information, provided regarding the Board's policy and harassment in general, will be age and content appropriate.

Retention of Investigatory Records and Materials

The Compliance Officer(s) is responsible for overseeing retention of all records that must be maintained pursuant to this policy. All individuals charged with conducting investigations under this policy shall retain all documents, electronically stored information ("ESI"), and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created and/or received as part of an investigation, which may include but not be limited to:

- A. all written reports/allegations/complaints/grievances/statements/responses pertaining to an alleged violation of this policy;
- B. any narratives that memorialize oral reports/allegations/complaints/grievances/statements/responses pertaining to an alleged violation of this policy;
- C. any documentation that memorializes the actions taken by District personnel or individuals contracted or appointed by the Board to fulfill its responsibilities related to the investigation and/or the District's response to the alleged violation of this policy;
- D. written witness statements;
- E. narratives, notes from, or audio, video, or digital recordings of witness interviews/statements;
- F. e-mails, texts, or social media posts that directly relate to or constitute evidence pertaining to an alleged violation of this policy (i.e., not after-the-fact commentary about or media coverage of the incident);
- G. notes or summaries prepared contemporaneously by the investigator in whatever form made (e.g., handwritten, keyed into a computer or tablet, etc.), but not including transitory notes whose content is otherwise memorialized in other documents;
- H. written disciplinary sanctions issued to students or employees and other documentation that memorializes oral disciplinary sanctions issued to students or employees for violations of this policy;
- I. dated written determinations/reports (including summaries of relevant exculpatory and inculpatory evidence) and other documentation that memorializes oral notifications to the parties concerning the outcome of the investigation, including any consequences imposed as a result of a violation of this policy;
- J. documentation of any supportive measures offered and/or provided to the Complainant and/or the Respondent, including no contact orders issued to both parties, the dates the no contact orders were issued, and the dates the parties acknowledged receipt of the no contact orders;
- K. documentation of all actions taken, both individual and systemic, to stop the discrimination or harassment, prevent its recurrence, eliminate any hostile environment, and remedy its discriminatory effects;
- L. copies of the Board policy and/or procedures/guidelines used by the District to conduct the investigation, and any documents used by the District at the time of the alleged violation to communicate the Board's expectations to students and staff with respect to the subject of this policy (e.g., Student Code of Conduct and/or Employee Handbooks);

- M. copies of any documentation that memorializes any formal or informal resolutions to the alleged discrimination or harassment;
- N. documentation of any training provided to District personnel related to this policy, including but not limited to, notification of the prohibitions and expectations of staff set forth in this policy and the role and responsibility of all District personnel involved in enforcing this policy, including their duty to report alleged violations of this policy and/or conducting an investigation of an alleged violation of this policy.

The documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) retained may include public records and records exempt from disclosure under Federal (e.g., FERPA, ADA) and/or State law (e.g., R.C. 3319.321) – e.g., student records and confidential medical records.

The documents, ESI, and electronic media (as defined in Policy 8315) created or received as part of an investigation shall be retained in accordance with Policy 8310, Policy 8315, Policy 8320, and Policy 8330 for not less than three (3) years, but longer if required by the District's records retention schedule.

BULLYING AND OTHER FORMS OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. The Board encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations between members of the school community.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, and violence within a dating relationship. The Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. This policy applies to all activities in the District, including activities on school property, on a school bus, or while enroute to or from school, and those occurring off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school- approved or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the school's control, in a school vehicle, or where an employee is engaged in school business.

This policy has been developed in consultation with parents/guardians, District employees, volunteers, students, and community members as prescribed in R.C. 3313.666 and the State Board of Education's Model Policy.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying means:

- A. any intentional written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that a student or group of students exhibits toward another particular student(s) more than once and the behavior both causes mental or physical harm to the other student(s) and is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student(s); or
- B. violence within a dating relationship.

"Electronic act" means an act committed through the use of a cellular telephone, computer, pager, personal communication device, or other electronic communication device.

Aggressive behavior is defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated enough, or serious enough, to negatively impact a student's educational, physical, or emotional well being. This type of behavior is a form of intimidation and harassment, although it need not be based on any of the legally protected characteristics, such as sex, race, color, national origin, marital status, or disability. It would include, but not be limited to, such behaviors as stalking, bullying/cyberbullying, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying also means cyberbullying through electronically transmitted acts (i.e., internet, e-mail, cellular telephone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand-held device) that a student(s) or a group of students exhibits toward another particular student(s) more than once and the behavior both causes mental and physical harm to the other student and is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student(s).

Any student or student's parent/guardian who believes they have been or are the victim of aggressive behavior should immediately report the situation to the Building Principal or assistant principal, or the Superintendent. The student may also report concerns to teachers and other school staff who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator or Board official. Complaints against the Building Principal should be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent should be filed with the Board President.

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that they believe to be aggressive behavior directed toward a student. Reports may be made to those identified above.

All complaints about aggressive behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. The Building Principal or appropriate administrator shall prepare a written report of the investigation upon completion. Such a report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether acts of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying were verified, and, when prohibited acts are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action shall be included in the report. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report.

If the investigation finds an instance of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying/cyberbullying by an electronic act or otherwise, has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action. This may include suspension or up to expulsion for students, up to discharge for employees, exclusion for parents/guardians, guests, volunteers, and contractors, and removal from any official position and/or a request to resign for Board members. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

If, during an investigation of a reported act of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying/cyberbullying, the Principal or appropriate administrator believes that the reported misconduct may have created a hostile

learning environment and may have constituted unlawful discriminatory harassment based on a Protected Class, the Principal will report the act of bullying and/or harassment to one of the Anti-Harassment Compliance Officers so that it may be investigated in accordance with the procedures set forth in Policy 5517 - Anti-Harassment.

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of aggressive behavior is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as aggressive behavior. Retaliation may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

Deliberately making false reports about harassment, intimidation, bullying and/or other aggressive behavior for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Deliberately making false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

If a student or other individual believes there has been aggressive behavior, regardless of whether it fits a particular definition, they should report it and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action.

The District shall implement intervention strategies (AG 5517.01) to protect a victim or other person from new or additional harassment, intimidation, or bullying and from retaliation following such a report.

This policy shall not be interpreted to infringe upon the First Amendment rights of students (i.e., to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is conducted at appropriate times and places during the school day and is protected by State or Federal law).

The complainant shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and as appropriate, that remedial action has been taken. If after investigation, acts of bullying against a specific student are verified, the Building Director or appropriate administrator shall notify the custodial parent/guardian of the victim of such finding. In providing such notification care shall be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying.

If after investigation, acts of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying by a specific student are verified, the Building Director or appropriate administrator shall notify in writing the custodial parent/guardian of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against a student, a description of such discipline shall be included in the notification.

Complaints

Students and/or their parents/guardians may file reports regarding suspected harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Such reports shall be reasonably specific including the person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the Building Director for review, investigation, and action.

Students, parents/guardians, and school personnel may make informal or anonymous complaints of conduct that they consider to be harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such complaints shall be reasonably specific including the person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who receives an informal or anonymous complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing, including the information provided. This written report shall be promptly forwarded by the school staff member and/or administrator to the Building Director for review, investigation, and appropriate action.

Individuals who make informal complaints as provided above may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the school staff member(s) and administrator(s) who receive the complaint. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action shall be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying.

When an individual making an informal complaint has requested anonymity, the investigation of such complaint shall be limited as is appropriate in view of the anonymity of the complaint. Such limitation of investigation may include restricting action to a simple review of the complaint subject to receipt of further information and/or the withdrawal by the complaining student of the condition that their report be anonymous.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The School District will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

Reporting Requirement

At least semi-annually, the Superintendent shall provide to the President of the Board a written summary of all reported incidents and post the summary on the District website (if one exists). The list shall be limited to the number of verified acts of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, whether in the classroom, on school property, to and from school, or at school-sponsored events.

Allegations of criminal misconduct and suspected child abuse will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or to Child Protective Services in accordance with statute. District personnel shall cooperate with investigations by such agencies.

Immunity

A School District employee, student, or volunteer shall be individually immune from liability in a civil action for damages arising from reporting an incident in accordance with this policy and R.C. 3313.666 if that person reports an incident of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying promptly, in good faith, and in compliance with the procedures specified in this policy. Such immunity from liability shall not apply to an employee, student, or volunteer determined to have made an intentionally false report about harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying.

Notification

Notice of this policy will be **annually** circulated to and posted in conspicuous locations in all school buildings and departments within the District and discussed with students, as well as incorporated into the teacher, student, and parent/guardian handbooks. At least once each school year a written statement describing the policy and consequences for violations of the policy shall be sent to each student's custodial parent or guardian.

The statement may be sent with regular student report cards or may be delivered electronically.

The policy and an explanation of the seriousness of bullying by electronic means shall be made available to students in the District and to their custodial parents or guardians.

State and Federal rights posters on discrimination and harassment shall also be posted at each building. All new hires will be required to review and sign off on this policy and the related complaint procedures.

Education and Training

In support of this policy, the Board promotes preventative educational measures to create greater awareness of aggressive behavior, including bullying and violence within a dating relationship. The Superintendent or designee shall provide appropriate training to all members of the School District community related to the implementation of this policy and its accompanying administrative guidelines. All training regarding the Board's policy and administrative guidelines about aggressive behavior and bullying in general, will be age and content appropriate.

Annually, the District shall provide all students enrolled in the District with age-appropriate instruction regarding the Board's policy, including a written or verbal discussion of the consequences for violations of the policy to the extent that State or Federal funds are appropriated for this purpose.

Students in grades seven (7) through twelve (12) shall receive age-appropriate instruction in dating violence prevention education, including instruction in recognizing dating violence warning signs and characteristics of healthy relationships. Parents/Guardians, who submit a written request to the Building Director to examine the dating violence prevention instruction materials used in the school, will be afforded an opportunity to review the materials within a reasonable period of time.

The District shall provide training, workshops, and/or courses on this policy for school employees and volunteers who have direct contact with students, to the extent that State or Federal funds are

appropriated for these purposes. Time spent by school staff in these training programs shall apply toward mandated continuing education requirements.

In accordance with Board Policy 8462, the Superintendent shall include a review of this policy on bullying and other forms of harassment in the required training in the prevention of child abuse, violence, and substance abuse and the promotion of positive youth development.

The Superintendent shall develop administrative guidelines to implement this policy. Guidelines shall include reporting and investigative procedures, as needed. The complaint procedure established by the Superintendent shall be followed.

NONDISCRIMINATION AND ACCESS TO EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The Gahanna-Jefferson Board of Education prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation or transgender identity), pregnancy, disability, age, religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes") in its educational programs or activities, and does not tolerate harassment of any kind. Equal educational opportunities shall be available to all students and shall be designed to meet the varying needs of all students. Further, the District provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The Board designates the following individuals to serve as the District's "Compliance Officers" (also known as "Civil Rights Coordinators") (hereinafter referred to as the "COs").

Shea Reed - Human Resource Director
614-471-7065
380 Granville Street
Gahanna, OH 43230

Denise Brown - Human Resources Coordinator
614-471-7065
380 Granville Street
Gahanna, OH 43230

Other Designated Administrator
614-471-7065
380 Granville Street
Gahanna, OH 43230

The names, titles, and contact information of these individuals will be published annually on the School District's web site and:

- A. in the parent/student and staff handbooks;
- B. on each individual school's web site.

Please read the full NonDiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity policy [here](#).

ADA/504 COMPLAINT AND DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES

If a person believes that they have been discriminated against on the basis of their disability, the person may utilize the following complaint procedures as a means of reaching, at the lowest possible administrative level, a prompt and equitable resolution of the matter.

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulations ("Section 504"), parents/guardians, students, and employees will be notified of their right to file an internal complaint regarding an alleged violation, misinterpretation or misapplication of Section 504. In addition, employees, students and their parents/guardians will be notified of their right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. Finally, students and parents/guardians will be advised of their right to request a due process hearing before an Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO) regarding the identification, evaluation or educational placement of persons with disabilities, and their right to examine relevant education records.

The District's Section 504/ADA Compliance Officer(s) ("District's Compliance Officer(s)"):

Director of Special Education
614-471-7065
380 Granville Street
Gahanna, OH 43230

Other Designated Administrator
614-471-7065
380 Granville Street
Gahanna, OH 43230

Building principals shall serve as Building Section 504/ADA Compliance Officer(s) ("Building Compliance Officers").

Internal complaints and requests for due process hearings must be put in writing and must identify the specific circumstances or areas of dispute that have given rise to the complaint or the request for a hearing, and offer possible solutions to the dispute. The complaint or request for due process hearing must be filed with a District Compliance Officer within the time limits specified below. The District's Compliance Officer is available to assist individuals in filing a complaint or request.

ANNUAL MEDICAID NOTIFICATION

OHIO MEDICAID SCHOOL PROGRAM NOTICE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN RIGHTS Parental Consent to Access Public Benefits

The school district has the opportunity to receive Federal Medicaid dollars through a program called the Ohio Medicaid School Program (MSP). Through this program, school districts can receive Medicaid dollars for services such as Speech, Audiology, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy,

Nursing, Psychology, Counseling, and Social Work services. The district can receive funding when a student receives one or more of these services and the student has current Medicaid insurance coverage. In the process of billing Medicaid for these services, certain billing information must be shared with the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services. Before the district can submit claim data for Medicaid billing purposes, we must first obtain a signed Parental Consent to Share Information and Access Medicaid.

This annual notice is to inform you of all of your legal protections and rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Your consent is voluntary. You have the right under 34 CFR Part 99 and Part 300 to withdraw your consent at any time. You are not required to enroll in Medicaid. Billing Medicaid will not require you to incur any out-of-pocket expenses such as a deductible or co-pay, decrease lifetime coverage, increase premiums or lead to the discontinuation of benefits, or result in you paying for services that would otherwise be covered by Medicaid. No matter whether you grant consent, refuse consent, or revoke your consent, your child will still be provided with an evaluation and/or the services listed in their IEP at no cost to you.

For a more detailed explanation of Medicaid Parental Consent, please see the following Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

34 CFR 300.154

34 CFR 300.503

34 CFR 300.622

34 CFR 99.30

For specific questions regarding the Medicaid School Program Parental Consent, please contact Healthcare Billing Services, Inc. at (740) 639-4218 or at Info@TeamHBS.com.

CHILD FIND

As required by *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act* (IDEA), the Gahanna-Jefferson Special Education Office conducts ongoing Child Find practices to locate and evaluate all children with disabilities - from birth through age 21 - residing within the school district, who may be homeless, wards of the state, or attending nonpublic schools. Special Education services are available through the public schools for children ages 3 to 21 who are identified with a disability.

If you have a child or know of a child you suspect may have a disability, please contact the GJPS Office of Special Education at 614-337-3777.

EARLY CHILDHOOD LICENSING

The most recent written compliance report for GJPS Preschool is posted next to our program's current license in the main office. Please reference rule 3301-37-02(I) of the Preschool Program Licensing

Rules. GJPS preschool is currently in compliance as of our last licensure inspection. Copies of the inspection report are available from the Office of Early Childhood Education upon request.

INSPECTING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Per policy 9130 found [here](#), if a concern arises, parents have the ability to inspect instructional materials.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Information regarding the District's asbestos management plan is available by contacting:

Kevin Klingler
Chief Operating Officer
Klinglerk@gjps.org

Note: Updates are made to district policies in an ongoing manner throughout the school year. Please be sure to check the district website to view any updates that may be made to the policies shared in this handbook.