

Gilroy Unified School District

District Handbook
2026-2027

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Welcome Letter from Superintendent

Dear Gilroy Unified School District Families,

Welcome to the 2026–27 school year!

As we open the doors to a new year of learning, I am filled with excitement, optimism, and a deep sense of purpose.

This year marks an exciting moment for the Gilroy Unified School District. Over the past year, we engaged students, families, staff, and community members in important conversations about the future of our schools. Through our Strategic Plan process and the development of our Facilities Master Plan, we listened carefully to what matters most to our community and what we want our schools to become for current and future generations of students.

As we begin this school year, our focus remains clear: providing exceptional learning experiences, fostering a strong sense of belonging, and ensuring that every student has the support they need to reach their full potential. We believe learning should be engaging, challenging, and joyful. We also remain steadfast in our commitment to providing safe, inclusive, and welcoming schools where every student feels seen, valued, and respected. The academic, social, and emotional well-being of our students continues to be at the heart of everything we do.

The success of our students depends on strong partnerships between schools and families. I invite you to stay connected and engaged throughout the year by participating in your school's Parent Club, ELAC, DELAC, School Site Council, or other school and district committees. I also encourage you to attend Board Meetings and join me at one of my Coffee Chats. Your voice, partnership, and support make a tremendous difference in the success of our students and schools.

Together, we have an opportunity to make this an extraordinary year—one filled with growth, achievement, and possibility. With hope in our hearts, determination in our work, and a shared commitment to excellence, there is no limit to what our students can accomplish.

On behalf of the Gilroy Unified School District, I wish you and your family a wonderful, successful, and inspiring 2026–27 school year.

Warmly,

Anisha Munshi, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Gilroy Unified School District

Gilroy Unified School District
Promise, Core Values & Commitment

Our Promise:

Where Learners Grow, Leaders Rise, and Futures Begin

GUSD Core Values

Who we are, how we lead, and the future we are committed to building together:

- **Students First**: We prioritize student learning, connectedness, and well-being in every decision.
- **Collaboration**: We work together with shared purpose to serve our students and strengthen our community.
- **Integrity**: We act with honesty, responsibility, and consistency in all we do.
- **Accountability**: We honor our commitments, own our actions, and follow-through to deliver results.
- **Respect**: We treat every individual with dignity and foster safe, supportive relationships.
- **Belonging**: We embrace diversity, respond to cultural needs, and provide every student with full access to opportunity.

Our Commitment:

L	**Learning for the Future** *We prepare students with the skills, mindsets, and experiences they need for a rapidly changing world.*
E	**Engaging, Safe School Communities** *We create supportive, welcoming environments where our students feel safe, connected, and ready to learn.*
A	**Access for All Students** *We provide students with experiences for opportunity, enrichment and support.*
D	**Deep, Strong Foundations** *We support students in building the academic and social-emotional skills needed for lifelong success.*

Main District Office Contact Information

Address: Gilroy Unified School District Office
7810 Arroyo Circle
Gilroy, CA 95020

Phone: 669-205-4000

Website: https://www.gilroyunified.org/

Office Hours: Monday - Friday: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Closed on school holidays

How to Use This Handbook

Every year, **Gilroy Unified School District** (GUSD), provides a handbook to the larger GUSD community of parents, guardians, students and staff which contains important information about resources and policies in GUSD, parent/guardian rights, and resources available to support your student's success.

The handbook includes official notifications about programs, policies, and procedures that may impact your student's education. Both California and federal laws require districts to provide this information to all families each year via an annual notification.

How Information is Organized

The handbook is organized to help you locate what you need in a timely manner. Information is grouped by topic and topics can be found in the table of contents (found just before this section).

> 💡 **Quick Tip:** Look for callout boxes like this one for important deadlines, key contacts, or rights you should know about.

Accessing Translations and Alternative Formats

You have the right to receive important school information in a language you understand and in a format that meets your needs (BP 5145.6). Here is a link to the handbook in Spanish.

The district must provide the following in accordance with (EC §48985) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101):

- **Language support:** Translations in languages spoken by 15% or more of students at your school
- **Interpretation services:** Available for meetings and conferences
- **Alternative formats:** Large print, audio, or electronic versions for families with disabilities
- **Oral interpretation:** Available when written translations are not feasible

> 📞 **Need Help?** Call your school office to request translations or alternative formats. Services are provided at no cost to families.

Education Code and Board Policies

Public schools in the state of California are governed by laws called the Education Code. You can find current Education Code information on the California Department of Education website: California Laws & Codes - Laws & Regulations (CA Dept of Education) Throughout the handbook you will see Education Code (EC) references that will look like: EC §##### (ex. EC 48900 or EC §5600). When you see this, you are seeing a reference to the section of California Education Code referenced for that part of the handbook.

School districts in California also have board policies and administrative regulations, which you will see referenced in the handbook. Board Policy (BP) uses this format: (BP ####). Board policies are rules set by Gilroy Unified School District's Board of Education that explain the district's goals and overall direction. Board policies must follow state and federal laws. You can find GUSD's most current version of board policies here: GUSD Board Policy Listing and use the search bar at the top to find the policy.

Key Terms and Definitions

The following table has terms that you might see in the handbook and their definitions..

Term	Definition
BP	Board Policy
Board of Education/BOE	The elected group of community members responsible for setting policies, approving budgets, and guiding the overall direction of the school district.
EC	California Education Code
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1975) - Guarantees eligible students with identified disabilities receive a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE).
IEP	Individual Education Program - a written plan for students with disabilities as part of special education services.
504 Plan	Accommodation plan for students with disabilities under Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act.
EL/ELL	English Learner/English Language Learner - students learning English as an additional language from their primary language.
LCAP	Local Control and Accountability Plan - a school district's plan for student achievement required in the state of California.
SARB	School Attendance Review Board - reviews cases of students with excessive absences or attendance / truancy problems.
Title I	Federal program providing extra support to schools with high numbers of low-income students.
McKinney-Vento Act	Federal law protecting educational rights of homeless students.

Contact for Questions or Assistance

Contact the appropriate office based on your specific question or concern. Getting help from the right person saves time and ensures you receive accurate information.
This table has the category of question and place to contact for support.

Type of Question	Contact
General handbook questions	Your school's main office
Student records, enrollment	Your school's main office
Special education services	Special Education Department, District Office
Language support, translations	Your school's main office
Complaints or concerns	Your school site principal
Transportation	Transportation Department
Food services	Nutrition Services Department

> 💡 **Tip:** School offices are typically open Monday through Friday during school hours. Outside of school hours, you can send an email. Answers to many questions can be found on the district website.

District Contact Information

This table includes the department, name and contact information for the District Office Departments.

Department	Contact	Phone Extension
Superintendent's Office	Dr. Anisha Munshi	669-205-4091
Business Services	Alvaro Meza	669-205-4081
Human Resources	Paul Winslow	669-205-4011

Department	Contact	Phone Extension
Student Services/Special Education	Anna Pulido	669-205-4020
Educational Services - Elementary	Jean Wells-Southland	669-205-4026
Educational Services - Secondary	Sonia Flores	669-205-4029
Fiscal Services	Kimberly Smith	669-205-4082
Information Technology	Maribel Guizar	669-205-4054
Transportation	Linda Figone	669-205-7900
Food Services	Nalani Battaglia	669-205-4074
Maintenance/Operations	Alejandro Calderon	669-205-7940
Facilities/Construction	Paul Nadeau	669-205-7920

> 📞 **Need Help?** If you're not sure which department to contact, call the main district number 669-205-4000 and the receptionist will direct you to the appropriate person.

Emergency Communications: During emergencies or school closures, the district will communicate through ParentSquare, which generates automated calls, text messages, and email. The district will also update its website and local media during emergencies and school closures. Make sure your contact information is current with your school's office.

Nondiscrimination Policy and Public Notice

The Board desires to provide a welcoming, safe, and supportive school environment that allows all students equal access to and opportunities in the district's academic, extracurricular, and other educational support programs, services, and activities. The Board prohibits, at any district school or school activity, unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment (including sexual harassment), intimidation, and bullying, targeted at any student by anyone, based on the student's actual or perceived characteristics, including:

- Race, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, or ethnic group identification
- Religion
- Age, marital, pregnancy, or parental status
- Physical or mental disability, medical condition,
- Sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression
- Genetic information or association with a person or group with one or more of these actions or perceived characteristics.

The Gilroy Unified School District's non-discrimination policy shall apply to all acts constituting unlawful discrimination or harassment related to school activity or to school attendance occurring within a district school, to acts which occur off campus or outside of school-related or school-sponsored activities, but which may have an impact or create a hostile environment at school, and to all acts of the Governing Board and the Superintendent in enacting policies and procedures that govern the district.

Unlawful discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying, may result from physical, verbal, nonverbal, or written conduct based on any of the categories listed above. Unlawful discrimination also occurs when prohibited conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or

benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; has the effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance; or otherwise adversely affects a student's educational opportunities.

This policy applies to all educational programs, services, activities, and employment practices. Further details on rights and protections is provided in the "Rights and Protections" section of this handbook. (BP 5145.3)

Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator
The district designates the following individual to coordinate compliance with nondiscrimination laws and handle related complaints:

Paul Winslow, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Gilroy Unified School District
7810 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020
Phone: (669) 205-4012
Email: paul.winslow@gilroyunified.org

Retaliation against anyone who reports or participates in an investigation of discrimination or harassment is strictly prohibited. No one can punish you for making a complaint or helping with an investigation

Annual Parent/Guardian Notifications

Each year, schools must provide families with important information about your rights, your student's education, and district policies. This section explains what these notifications include and what your responsibilities are related to the education of your student in GUSD. The GUSD website also has a section titled “Know Your Rights” where you can find specific information categorized by topic. Know Your Rights - Gilroy Unified School District

Parents' and Guardians' Rights and Responsibilities

State law requires districts to tell parents and guardians about their rights and responsibilities each year (EC §48980). Below is a summary of key rights and detailed information is provided in the related sections of this handbook. To receive this digital handbook, you signed a digital form acknowledging receipt of the information contained within the handbook. Signing the acknowledgement form confirms receipt of this notice but does not indicate agreement with district policies or consent for programs (EC *§48980).*

Parent/Guardian Notification of Rights

The following table is a summary of the parent/guardian notification of area of rights, a description of what that means for a parent or guardian and the references to the California Education Code (EC) or GUSD Board Policy and Administrative Regulations (BP/AR).

Parent/Guardian Notification of Right	What It Means for You	Key References
Participation in Your Child's Education	You have the right to be informed about and participate in your child's education, including meeting with your child's teacher, attending school meetings, volunteering, and serving on advisory committees.	BP/AR 1240, BP/AR 6020; EC § 51101
Receive Required Annual Notifications	You must be notified each year about your rights, school rules, programs affecting your child, and other required topics.	BP/AR 5145.6; EC §§ 48980
Review School Rules and Discipline Policies	You have the right to receive and review the district's discipline rules each year and understand the behaviors that may lead to disciplinary action.	BP/AR 5144, BP 5131; EC §§ 35291, 48900–48927. 48980

Attendance and Absence Policies	You must be informed annually of district policies on student attendance, excused absences, and truancy prevention.	BP/AR 5113; EC §§ 48205–48208, 48980(a)
Health Requirements & Services	You will receive annual notice of required immunizations, physical examinations, health screenings, and any available health services.	BP/AR 5141.3, BP/AR 5141.32; EC §§ 49403, 49451, 48980(a)
Access to School Records	You may inspect, review, and request corrections to your child's educational records.	BP/AR 5125.1, AR 5125.3; EC §§ 49060–49079
Request Meetings with Teachers or Administrators	You may request a meeting to discuss your child's progress, needs, or concerns.	BP/AR 5020; EC § 51101
Advance Notice of Certain Activities	You have the right to be notified before your child takes part in surveys, health screenings, or other activities involving sensitive topics.	BP/AR 5022; EC § 51513;
Exemptions from Instruction	You may excuse your child from parts of sexual health, family life, or HIV prevention education by providing a written request.	BP/AR 6142.1; EC §§ 51240, 51938

Prospectus of School Curriculum	The curriculum of every course offered by the schools of the district is compiled annually by each school in a prospectus. Each school prospectus is available for review upon request at each school site. Upon review of the curriculum, if parents/guardians believe an aspect to be controversial, they may wish to refer to BP 6144. Requests should be in writing and sent to the school site principal. Nothing in a school's prospectus should be interpreted as requiring students to be compelled to affirm or disavow any particular personally or privately held world view, religious doctrine, or opinion.	BP 6144; EC §49091.14
Choice of School within District/Interdistrict Transfers	You may request a transfer within the district or to another district under certain conditions.	BP/AR 5116.1, BP/AR 5117; EC §§ 35160.5, 46600 et seq.
Meal Program Eligibility	You will be informed each year about the free and reduced-price meal program/Universal Meals and how to submit a Universal Benefits Application.	BP/AR 3553; EC § 48980(b)
Language Access	You have the right to receive important information in your primary language if 15% or more of students at a school speak that language.	BP/AR 5145.6; EC § 48985

Participation in School Governance	You may serve on the School Site Council, English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC), or other advisory bodies.	BP/AR 0420, BP/AR 6174; EC §§ 62002.5, 64001
File Complaints & Receive Responses	You may file complaints regarding discrimination, harassment, special education services, Williams facilities issues, and other matters; the school must respond within required timelines.	BP/AR 1312.3, BP/AR 1312.4; EC §§ 234–234.5, 35186
Safe School Environment	Your child has the right to learn in a safe environment free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination.	BP 5137, BP 5145.3; EC §§ 200, 220
School Safety Plan Availability	You have the right to review the Comprehensive School Safety Plan for your child's school. Each school's plan is updated annually and available for review at the school office.	BP/AR 0450; EC §§32280
Physical Education Exemption	You may request that a student be excused from physical education for valid medical reasons (temporary or permanent), or for religious beliefs, as provided by law.	BP/AR 6142.7; EC § 51241

Special Education & Section 504 Services	You have the right to request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services and to participate in the development of your child's services plan.	BP/AR 6164.4, BP/AR 6159; EC § 56301
Educational Rights Regardless of Immigration Status	Every child has the right to attend California public schools and the right to a free public education regardless of immigration status. Families have the right to information about the District's procedures for responding to immigration enforcement on campus.	BP/AR 1445; EC § 234.7

Translation Requirements

GUSD works to ensure families who speak languages other than English can access school information in their primary language. (EC §48985)

Schools must provide translation when:

- 15% or more of students speak a single primary language other than English
- Federal or state law requires translation
- A parent requests translation services

Available support:

- Written translations of key documents
- Oral interpretation for meetings and calls
- Translated enrollment and permission forms
- Multilingual staff or contracted interpreters

To request translation/interpretation support: Contact your school office. Services are provided at no cost, but allow extra time for document translation.

Your Responsibilities as a Parent/Guardian

Along with these rights, you have the responsibility to:

- Ensure your child attends school regularly and on time
- Notify the school when your child will be absent
- Support your child's learning by providing space and time for homework, encouraging reading and your own interest in their classes
- Communicate with your child's teachers and school staff about progress
- Stay informed via school district communications and be reachable
- Follow school rules and district policies when on campus or at school events
- Encourage your child to respect the rights and dignity of others

Required Acknowledgment of Receipt

California Education Code (EC § 48982) requires you to acknowledge receiving certain notifications to ensure important information reaches families and meets legal requirements. **To access this digital handbook, you provided a digital acknowledgment via ParentSquare, confirming you have received this notification and understand that full details are included throughout this handbook.** This signature does not indicate agreement with district policies or consent for programs.

You may also need to acknowledge receipt of other notifications throughout the year by signing and returning forms, completing online acknowledgment forms, attending required meetings, or responding to specific school requests.

General District Information

This section provides an overview of district operations, including the school calendar, accountability reports, and contact information.

School Calendar

GUSD provides the families of its students with information about the school calendar in electronic format on the GUSD website. You can also request a printed copy from your school office. Be sure to subscribe to calendar notifications through the district's communication system.

The school calendar includes:

- First and last days of school
- Holiday breaks and school closures
- Minimum days and early release schedules
- Staff development days when students are not in session
- Parent/Guardian conference dates
- Testing windows and important deadlines

> 📌 **Important:** Calendar dates may change due to weather, emergencies, or other unforeseen circumstances. Always check the district website or communication apps for the most current information.

Minimum Days and Staff Development Days

Certain days throughout the school year have shortened schedules to allow for teacher planning, professional development, and parent conferences. **Minimum Days/Early Release Days** are the scheduled school days that will end earlier than the standard daily

schedule. Follow your school site's bell schedule to know the release time for the minimum day. Transportation and meal services are adjusted to the schedule, afterschool programs might be modified or canceled. Be sure to mark these on your calendar. **Staff Development Days** are days when students do not attend school and teachers and staff are participating in required training and planning.

> 💡 **Planning Tip:** Mark minimum days and staff development days on your family calendar early in the school year to arrange childcare or adjust work schedules as needed.

Gilroy Unified School District
2026-2027 Instructional Calendar

Wednesday - August 19, 2026 - First Day of Student Instruction

Note: TK - 5th Grades, Wednesdays are *Minimum Days* for Students

(Student Instructional School Days are highlighted in "blue")

September 7, 2026 - No School, Labor Day Holiday

October 9, 2026 - End of 1st Quarter, Middle and High School Programs
October 12, 2026 - No School, Indigenous Peoples' Day Holiday Observance
October 16, 2026 - No School for all students (Staff Development Day)
October 20, 21, 22, 2026 - Parent Teacher Conferences for 6th - 8th Grades *(Minimum Days)*
October 30, 2026 - End of 1st Trimester, TK - 5th Grade Programs

November 11, 2026 - No School, Veteran's Day Holiday Observance
November 12, 13, 16, 17, 19 2026 - Parent Teacher Conferences for TK - 5th Grade Programs (*Minimum Days*)
November 23 - 27, 2026 - No School, Thanksgiving Break

December 16, 17, 18, 2026 - High School Programs, Minimum Days for Final Exams
December 18, 2026 - End of 2nd Quarter (Semester), Middle & High School Programs
December 21, 2026 - January 1, 2027 - No School, Winter Break

January 4, 2027 - Teacher Records Day for Middle and High School Programs, No School for 6th - 12th Grade Programs; TK - 5th Grades in Session
January 18, 2027 - No School, Martin Luther King Day Observance
January 22, 2027 - No School for all students (Staff Development Day)

February 12, 2027 - End of 2nd Trimester, TK - 5th Grade Students
February 15 - 19, 2027 - No School, February Break

March 19, 2027 - End of 3rd Quarter, Middle & High School Programs

March 29 - April 2, 2027 - No School, Spring Break

May 28, 2027 - Minimum Day for all Students
May 31, 2027 - No School, Memorial Day Observance

June 1, 2027 - Teacher Records Day for Elementary School Programs, No School for TK - 5th Grade Program; 6th - 12th Grade Programs in Session
June 9, 10, 11, 2027 - High School Programs, Minimum Days for Final Exams
June 11, 2027 - End of 4th Quarter (Semester), Middle and High School Program
End of Trimester for TK - 5th Grades Programs
June 11, 2027 - Last Day of Student Instruction (Minimum Day)

Adopted by the GUSD Board of Education: 12/18/2025

July 2026

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			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 2026

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						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

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
		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

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
				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

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
		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		

January 2027

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					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

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	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

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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28	29	30	31			

April 2027

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May 2027

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June 2027

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27	28	29	30			

School Accountability Report Card (SARC) Availability

Each school is required to publish an annual School Accountability Report Card (SARC) that provides information about school performance and resources. (EC§ 35256; 35258)

The SARC for each school in GUSD includes:

- Student achievement data and test scores
- Teacher qualifications and class sizes
- School safety and discipline statistics
- Facilities conditions and maintenance
- Curriculum and programs offered
- School expenditures and resources

How to access the SARC:

- Available on the district website by February 1st each year
- Printed copies available upon request from the school office
- Available in English and Spanish
- Posted on the California Department of Education website (School Accountability Report Card (SARC) (CA Dept of Education))

Why it matters: The SARC helps you understand how your child's school is performing, what resources are available, and how it compares to other schools in the district and state.

> 💡 **Note About Data:** SARC data is typically from the previous school year, so current year improvements may not yet be reflected in the most recent report.

Gilroy Unified School District – School Directory

Elementary		
Eliot	475 Old Gilroy Street	(669) 205-4300
El Roble	930 Third Street	(669) 205-4200
Glen View	600 Eighth Street	(669) 205-4400
Las Animas	6550 Cimino Street	(669) 205-4500
Luigi Aprea	9225 Calle del Rey	(669) 205-4600
Rod Kelley	8755 Kern Avenue	(669) 205-4700
Rucker	325 Santa Clara Avenue	(669) 205-4800
Middle		
Ascencion Solorsano	7121 Grenache Way	(669) 205-5000
Brownell	7800 Carmel Street	(669) 205-5100
South Valley	7881 Murray Avenue	(669) 205-5200
High		
Christopher High (CHS)	850 Day Road	(669) 205-5300
Gilroy High (GHS)	750 West Tenth Street	(669) 205-5400
Dr. TJ Owens Gilroy Early College Academy (GECA)	5055 Santa Teresa Blvd	(669) 205-5550
Alternative, Continuation and Adult Education		
Virtual Learning Academy (VLA)	Online for CHS and GHS students	Contact CHS / GHS
Mt. Madonna	9300 Wren Ave	(669) 205-5500
Adult Education	9300 Wren Ave	(669) 205-5291
District Programs (Early Childhood Programs) Multiple Locations		**(669) 205-7960**

Attendance and Enrollment

Regular school attendance is essential for your child's academic success. This section explains attendance requirements, definitions of excused and unexcused absences, enrollment options, and what to do when your child is absent.

Compulsory Attendance Laws

Regular attendance is one of the most important factors in your child's success at school. California law (EC §48200) requires students ages 6–18 to attend school every day unless they have an excused absence. Parents and guardians are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school every day that school is in session. To that end, Gilroy Unified School District (GUSD) partners with families to address attendance concerns early and provide support.

Parent/Guardian responsibilities include:

- Enrolling your child in school by the required age
- Ensuring your child arrives at school on time each day
- Notifying the school when your child will be absent
- Prioritizing attendance and try to schedule appointments outside of school hours
- Providing documentation for absences when required
- Working with school staff to address attendance problems and maintaining open communication with school and requesting support or resources when needed

Consequences for not following attendance laws:

- Students may be referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB)
- Parents may face legal action, including fines or community service
- Students may lose credit for courses or be retained in their current grade
- Students may lose privileges for participation in school activities

📌 **Did You Know?** California schools provide 180 days of instruction each year. Missing just 2 days per month adds up to 18 missed school days, which is 10% of the school year.

Attendance Options

California provides several options for meeting compulsory education requirements beyond traditional public school attendance. As part of required annual notifications, GUSD notifies parents of the available school programs and options. All attendance options must provide instruction in required subjects and meet minimum instructional time requirements. (EC §§46600–46611).

Available options include:

- **Public school in your attendance area:** Your neighborhood school based on where you live
- **Continuation / Alternative Schools:** Alternative programs for high school students in GUSD include Virtual Learning Academy (VLA) - (high school), Mt. Madonna Continuation High School
- **Intra-district transfer:** Attending a different public school within the district if space is available
- **Inter-district transfer:** Attending a public school in a different district with approval from both districts

To explore attendance options: Review the information on the Enrollment page of the GUSD website for information about transfers, open enrollment periods, and application processes.

Address Verification

Students must live within the district boundaries to attend district schools, unless they have an approved transfer or attend under another legal provision.

Acceptable proof for Address Verification:

To establish residency, two (2) forms of documentation showing the name and address of the parent/guardian within the district, including, but not limited to any of the following:

- Utility bills (gas, electric, water, cable, or landline phone)
- Lease agreement or mortgage statement
- Property tax bill or homeowner's insurance
- Government correspondence (DMV, voter registration, court documents)

If you, or a family member, fits one of the situations below, contact the school site for assistance. They will direct you to the district department to support your enrollment (special verification of address needed):

- Foster youth
- Students experiencing homelessness
- Unaccompanied youth
- Migrant Education Program students
- Military families

If questions arise regarding a student's actual place of residence, the district may conduct a residency investigation (EC §48204).

Absences

Not all absences are the same. California law defines specific reasons that excuse a student from school attendance. Please, be advised that, whether the student's absence is considered excused or unexcused, it contributes to their absenteeism rate and may result in learning loss and in the student falling behind.

Excused Absences

Students will not be marked truant for absences due to the following reasons which are identified as excused absences. (EC §48205) Following is a list of commonly used excused absences:

1. **Illness:** Including an absence for the benefit of the pupil's mental or behavioral health
2. **Medical, dental, chiropractic, or optometric appointments:** When scheduled during school hours
3. **Quarantine:** Under direction of a county or city health officer

4. **Funeral services:** For immediate family members (5 days)
5. **Court appearances:** Including jury duty for students age 18 and up
6. **Illness or medical appointments:** during school hours for a child for whom the pupil is custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child
7. **Religious observances:** For observed holidays, as requested in writing by parents
8. **Military family visits:** Spending time with deployed family members
9. **Cultural ceremonies:** Participating in cultural events or traditions
10. **Military entrance processing:** Student's participation in military entrance processing
11. **Civic or political event:** Participation in civic demonstrations during the school day by middle and high school students (a single excused absence is allowed for this reason when notified in advance (EC §48205)

Additional reasons are noted in Ed Code for less frequent occurrences than those listed above.

Parents and guardians must notify the school when a student is absent or tardy and provide documentation if required (EC § 48205). All absences and tardies must be verified by the student's parent/guardian, another adult responsible for the student, or by the student if they are 18 or older (EC § 46012; 5 California Code of Regulations § 306). Whenever possible, please clear the absence or tardy on the same day it occurs. If that is not possible, it must be cleared within five (5) school days in one of the following ways:

- A written note from parent/guardian,
- An in-person or telephone conversation between the school office staff and parent/guardian,
- A ParentSquare message from the parent/guardian, or
- A physician's verification.
- School staff can also provide confirmation of confidential medical appointments as an excused absence.

Tardies

Arriving late or leaving early, counts as a tardy. If a student is 30 minutes or more late (or leaves 30+ minutes early) without a valid excuse, it counts as a truant event toward the "3" that trigger truancy notices (EC §48260). All tardies should be cleared the same day by a parent/guardian (or by the student of age 18+).

Religious Instruction

Students may be excused for up to four (4) days per month to receive religious instruction away from school with the written consent of their parents or guardians, may be excused from school in order to participate in religious exercises or to receive moral and religious instruction at their respective places of worship or at other suitable place or place away from school property when all conditions outlined in Education Code are met. (EC §46014) Parents must provide written notice and students must attend at least the minimum school day for their school-based program.

Confidential Medical Services

Students in grades 7-12 may be excused to obtain confidential medical services without parental consent in specific circumstances (EC §46010.1). Contact your school counselor or Academic Coordinator for more information about this option.

> 📱 **Reporting Absences:** Call your school office before 9:00 AM on the day of absence or report all absences through ParentSquare.

Unexcused Absences

Any absence that does not meet the criteria for excused absences is considered unexcused and counts toward truancy. Failure to notify the school of an absence will result in the absence being recorded as unexcused. Common unexcused absences include:

- Family vacations during school time
- Oversleeping or transportation problems
- Staying home to care for siblings
- Missing school for non-emergency family events

Students Age 18+

Students 18 and older may provide reasons for their own absences. This responsibility also means that if their absences are excessive, they will be held accountable. Excessive absences due to illness above a 10% of the school days may result in the request that they bring a doctor's note. Excessive truancy may result in referrals to SARB and JAID/Court.

Truancy and School Attendance Review Board (SARB)

When a student has too many unexcused absences, he/she/they may be classified as truant and referred to the School Attendance Review Board. State law requires each student to be in school each day unless they have a valid excuse.

Chronic Absence Definition

A student is defined as “chronically absent” when they miss 10% or more of the school days for any reason (excused or unexcused). Chronic absence is used to offer help early; it is not the same as truancy..

Students who are 18 years or older must also provide verification from medical or school personnel for absences once they reach the 10% limit.

Truancy Definition

A student is truant when, in one school year, they have:

- Three (3) or more unexcused full-day absences, or
- Three (3) or more unexcused tardies/early departures of 30 minutes or more, or
- Any combination of the above totaling three (3).

Schools must notify families when a student becomes truant and offer support to improve attendance (EC §48260.5).

School Attendance Review Board (SARB)

SARB is a community-based team that works with students and families to improve attendance and address underlying causes of truancy. The members of the SARB team include school district representatives, community members, parents (not involved in the specific case), and/or representatives from law enforcement, social services, or mental health agencies. The goal of SARB is to help students succeed in school, not to punish families (EC §48263).

When Absences Become a Concern

The district tracks attendance carefully and follows a step-by-step process that leads to a referral to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB), if a student has repeated unexcused absences or tardies of more than 30 minutes.

Steps to Address Truancy	Actions at Each Step of Truancy Process
Step 1: First Truancy Letter (3 unexcused events)	• Sent after **three (3) unexcused absences or tardies** (30+ minutes) in one school year. • Explains the importance of attendance and lists available supports.
Step 2: Second Truancy Letter and SST Meeting (6 unexcused events)	• Sent after **six (6) unexcused absences or tardies**. • Families are invited to a **Student Success Team (SST) meeting** to create an attendance improvement plan and identify needed supports.
Step 3: Third Truancy Letter and SARB Referral (9 unexcused events)	• Sent after **nine (9) unexcused absences or tardies**. • The case is referred to the **School Attendance Review Board (SARB)**, which includes district staff, law enforcement, health, and social service representatives. • The SARB meeting helps families problem-solve barriers to attendance and creates a formal attendance contract.
Step 4: District Attorney Referral (continued non-attendance)	• If absences continue after the SARB contract, the case may be referred to the **District Attorney's Office** for legal action (EC §§48260–48262).

School Attendance Review Board (SARB) can help with:

- Identifying barriers to attendance (transportation, health, family issues)
- Connecting families with community resources
- Developing individualized attendance improvement plans
- Providing support services to address underlying problems

Building Success Through Attendance: Students with consistent attendance develop stronger academic skills and peer relationships. Missing just a few days each month can create learning gaps, but early intervention helps students get back on track.

> 📌 **Getting Help:** If your family faces barriers to consistently get to school, GUSD staff are here to work with you to find solutions.

Student Records and Privacy

Your child's educational records contain important information about their academic progress and school experiences. This section explains your rights to access, review, and control how this information is used.

Access to Student Records

Parents and guardians have the right to inspect and review their child's educational records maintained by the school. This includes academic records, health records, and other documents that contain information specifically about your student.

Parts of a Student's Educational Record Maintained by the School
• Report cards and transcripts • Standardized test scores and assessment results • Attendance records • Disciplinary records and incident reports   ○ *Disciplinary records and incident reports may have portions redacted to protect other students' privacy* • Special education records and IEP documents • Health records maintained by the school • Teacher and counselor notes about your child

How to request viewing educational records:
Schools must provide timely access to view the records requested. Below are the steps to get access to the particular records you want to view as a parent/guardian.

- Contact your school's main office or registrar and you will be directed to the right person for your records request

- Submit a written request as directed by the school official in charge of those records and include identification to verify your relationship to the student
- Schedule an appointment if you need help understanding the records

> 📌**Changing Schools?** If you need records for enrollment at another school, inform the school office so they can direct you to the steps for a timely processing of your request..

Access to Student Records Without Parental Consent

Student records are confidential and may not be released without written parental consent or a judicial order, except in specific circumstances. Access may be granted to individuals with a legitimate educational interest, including school officials and employees, members of a school attendance review board, officials from other public schools or correctional facilities where the student is or may be enrolled, and certain federal, state, and local education officials as permitted by law. Other exceptions include parents of dependent adult students, the student (if age 16 or older or having completed 10th grade), certain prosecuting agencies, probation officers, and district attorneys under defined conditions. (EC §49076)

Records may also be released in emergencies to protect health or safety, for financial aid purposes, to accrediting associations, to organizations conducting approved educational studies, and to officials of private schools where the student is or intends to enroll. Anyone granted access to records may not share the information further without parental consent, except within the same agency or organization when there is a legitimate interest. (EC §49076)

Directory Information and Opt-Out Rights

Directory information includes basic details about your student that schools may share publicly without your permission unless you specifically opt-out. GUSD carefully controls who can access student directory information and will only share it when appropriate and legal.

Categories of Information Included in Directory Information:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Date of birth
- Major field of study
- Participation record in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of athletic team members
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees and awards received
- Most recent previous school attended

What is NOT shared:

- Student's social security number
- Student ID (when it can be used to access educational records alone)
- Student's citizenship status, immigration status, place of birth, or any other information including national origin

When directory information might be shared:

- School yearbooks and programs
- Athletic event programs
- Honor roll announcements
- Graduation programs
- Local newspaper recognition articles
- School websites and social media
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of students in 11th and 12th grade to military recruiters upon request
- Private school and college outreach to grade 12 students

Organization Type	Access Level	Your Opt-Out Rights
Opt-out must be received in writing by September 30th each year and will remain in effect each year. Opt-out option is during the registration process when confirming emergency contact info in the district's Student Information Database -Aeries.		

Organization Type	Access Level	Your Opt-Out Rights
News media	May receive directory information for legitimate news purposes	Standard opt-out applies
Nonprofit organizations	May receive information if district determines it benefits students	Standard opt-out applies
Colleges and universities	May receive information for recruitment	Standard opt-out applies
Military recruiters	Must receive names, addresses, phone numbers by federal law	Special opt-out required - contact school office
Private schools/colleges	May receive 12th-grade and graduate information for academic purposes only	Standard opt-out applies
California Student Aid Commission	GPA of all 12th grade students submitted by October 1st of each year for the Cal Grant financial aid process	Please contact your high school Academic Coordinator to opt out
California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI)	High School transcript information	Please contact your high school Academic Coordinator to opt out
California State University (CSU) Direct Admission	Directory information and eligibility (A-G completion) for direct admission into CSU	Please contact your high school Academic Coordinator to opt out
For-profit companies	Cannot receive information (except news media and employers)	Not applicable - information not shared

Important notes:

- The district may deny any request if it is not in students' best interests

- Military recruiter access is required by federal law, but you can opt-out by submitting a written request
- Private companies cannot purchase or use student information for marketing purposes

All sharing of directory information follows federal and state privacy laws (EC §49073; EC §49603). The most current version of GUSD Board Policy on Directory Information can be found here: BP 5125.1

How to opt-out: Submit a written opt-out request to your school office before September 30th of the current school year, or within 30 days of enrollment after that time. This request remains in effect until you change it in writing (EC §49073).

> ⚠️ **Opt-out Considerations:** If you opt-out of directory information, your child's name, photo, and other information will **not appear in public-facing school materials** such as yearbooks, sports programs, or honor roll lists. Check with GUSD for current policy and practices regarding partial opt-outs.

Challenge and Amendment of Records

If you believe information in your child's educational records is inaccurate, misleading, or violates your child's privacy rights, you have the right to request corrections (EC §49070)

Step	What You Need to Do	Timeline
1	Submit a written request to the Superintendent of the school district describing the specific information you want changed and why	Within reasonable time of discovering the issue
2	Provide supporting documentation (medical records, court documents, other evidence)	With your initial request
3	Meet with school officials to discuss your concerns and review the evidence	Within 30 days of receipt of request.

Step	What You Need to Do	Timeline
4	Receive response about whether the change will be made. If request is denied, parent/guardian can request an appeal of decision	Within 30 days of a decision refusing challenge, parent/guardian can appeal
5	Governing board reviews appeal and makes decision that is final	Within 30 days of receipt of appeal, the governing board will meet and make a final decision.

Grounds for challenging records:

- Information is inaccurate.
- Information is based on unsubstantiated personal conclusion or inference.
- Information is a conclusion or inference outside of an observer's area of competence.
- Information was not based on personal observation (with time and place noted).
- Information is misleading.
- Information violates your child's privacy or the privacy of another pupil.

If your request is denied:

- You may appeal the first denial and request a formal (final) hearing with the governing board.
- You have the right to place a written statement in your child's record explaining your disagreement.
- Your statement will remain with the disputed information permanently.

Grade changes: Academic grades given by teachers can only be changed if there was a clerical error, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency. Teachers have the final authority over the grades they assign (EC §49070).

Data Sharing

Schools may share student information with other educational institutions, government agencies, and service providers under specific circumstances and with appropriate safeguards. The following table lists the data that is permitted to be shared, the required protections for data sharing and your rights in the process.

Permitted Data Sharing	Required Protections	Your Rights
Transferring records to schools where your child enrolls	Student identities must be protected in research and reporting	Request information about who has accessed your child's records
Sharing information with educational researchers (without identifying students)	Data sharing agreements must include security and privacy requirements	Object to certain types of data sharing (with some exceptions for legal requirements)
Providing data to state and federal education agencies for required reporting	Parents must be notified of any unusual disclosures	Receive notification if there is a data breach affecting your child's information
Disclosing information to comply with legal requirements or court orders	Schools must track who accesses student records	

Schools participating in state and federal programs must comply with data reporting requirements, but they must protect student privacy in the process (EC §60900).

Privacy Rights for Surveys and Screenings

Federal law provides specific protections for students regarding surveys, screenings, and other activities that collect personal information, or that ask about the following protected topics, unless parents/guardians give prior consent (if funded by the U.S. Department of Education) or are given the opportunity to opt-out.

Protected Survey Topics

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent/guardian
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family
- Sexual behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student has close family relationships

- Legally recognized privileged relationships (e.g., with lawyers, doctors, or ministers)
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent/guardian
- Income (except when required by law to determine program eligibility)

Parent/Guardian Rights

- **Review survey materials** before the survey or screening is administered
- **Receive prior notice** before surveys involving protected topics are given
- **Opt your child out** of participating in certain surveys, and/or certain physical exams or health screenings
- **Have alternative activities offered** for students who do not participate
- **Ensure no penalty** is imposed on students who opt-out

School Responsibilities

- Provide reasonable notice to parents/guardians before administering any survey involving protected topics
- Make survey questions and screening instruments available for review upon request
- Protect student privacy during the administration of surveys or screenings.Follow these protections for any U.S. Department of Education–funded surveys, and apply them to other surveys at the school's discretion

> 🔒 **Privacy Protection:** If you have concerns about any survey, screening, or data collection activity, contact your school principal immediately. Schools must balance educational needs with student privacy rights.

Law Enforcement Interviews on Campus
Peace officers may interview students at school if they believe the student is a suspect or witness. Students have the right to request a school support person of their choice during the interview and must be informed of this right by the officer or child protective services worker. Parents are notified if a student is released to an officer, except when the student is taken into custody as a victim of abuse or neglect. (EC §48906)

Questions about student records or privacy? Contact your school's main office or the GUSD Student Services department. They can explain your specific rights and help you navigate any concerns about your child's educational record.

Health and Safety

Keeping students healthy and safe is a top priority. This section explains procedures for visitors to campus, health requirements, available services, and safety measures that protect all students.

School Visitors - Policy and Procedures

In order to maintain safe and effective learning environments across campuses, GUSD has the following policies and procedures in place related to visitors on campus and monitoring visitors.

Checkout/Release Procedures:

A student will not be released to an adult that is not listed on the student's emergency contact card. Individuals authorized to pick up (listed on the card) must show a valid photo I.D. and be at least 18 years of age.

Video Security Camera

The Board of Education through policy authorizes the use of video security cameras in district buildings and grounds to promote a safe school environment for students, staff and visitors. Appropriate signs will be posted in building entrances and at other locations throughout the school to inform visitors, staff, students and parents/ guardians that video recordings may occur on district property (BP 3515)

Parent School Entry

All school gates and doors will be closed and locked after students arrive at school in the morning. Parents requesting to enter the school must use the Intercom located outside the main office next to the front door. Front office staff will assist you. Any

parents/visitors staying on campus must sign in using the Raptor Visitor Management System by scanning their US Government identification card at the kiosk.

Food Delivery Policy

The District cannot allow outside food delivery, including professional delivery and food brought from home, to students during school hours, both for student safety reasons and to control disruptions of school operations and the learning environment. (BP 1250, BP 6116; EC §32212)

Response to Immigration Enforcement

California law protects every student's right to attend public school regardless of immigration status. The District is committed to providing a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students and families (BP/AR 1445; EC §234.7). See resources on the Gilroy Unified School District website.

What Families Should Know

- Every child has the right to a free public education regardless of immigration status.
- The District does not collect or share information about a student's or family's immigration status unless required by law.
- Immigration enforcement officers generally may not access students, student records, or nonpublic school areas without a valid judicial warrant, court order, or other legal authority.
- Parents/guardians will be notified of requests for student information or access when permitted by law.
- Please refer to the California Attorney General's Know Your Educational Rights guide (SP) for additional information.

> 📅 **Planning Tip:** Keep your student's emergency contact information current so the school can reach trusted adults in the event of an emergency.

Immunization Requirements

State law requires that all students under age 18 be immunized against certain diseases unless they are exempt for medical reasons. This protects your child and the entire school community from preventable diseases. Your child may be excluded from school if the immunization requirements are not met. Schools will review immunization records at all TK/K-12 entry points, including promotion from elementary to middle school. (BP 48980.4)

Required immunizations include:

- Polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough)
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- Hepatitis B and varicella (chickenpox)
- Additional vaccines as required by California law

Documentation needed:

- Official immunization record from your healthcare provider needed upon registration for the school year
- Records must show specific dates vaccines were given
- California Immunization Record (Blue Card) is preferred but not required

Medical exemptions: A licensed physician must provide written documentation that immunization would endanger your child's health, specifying which vaccines are exempted and whether the exemption is temporary or permanent. Only medical exemptions are permitted.

> 📅 **Planning Tip:** Schedule immunization appointments well before school starts. Some vaccines require multiple doses given weeks apart.

Medication Administration

Students who need medication during school hours can receive assistance from trained school personnel when proper documentation is provided. The following table shows the requirements and description to have medication administered at school.

Requirement	Details
Healthcare Provider Form	Written order specifying medication, dosage, timing, and possible side effects
Parent Request	Written request authorizing school to administer medication
Medication Container	Original pharmacy or manufacturer container with current label
Self-Administration	Additional authorization required confirming student can safely self-medicate

Parent responsibilities:

- Deliver medications to school personally
- Pick up unused medications at end of school year
- Update forms when medication changes

Epinephrine

The Superintendent or designee shall make epinephrine auto-injectors available at each school for providing emergency medical aid to any person suffering, or reasonably believed to be suffering, from an anaphylactic reaction. (EC §49414)

Physical Examinations and Parent Refusal

Kindergarten physical examination: Students entering kindergarten must have a physical examination within 18 months before or after starting school using an approved form. (EC §49452.8)

Parent refusal rights: Submit a written statement annually to refuse physical examinations. However, students with suspected contagious diseases may be excluded from school until the condition is resolved (EC §49451).

Health Screenings

Schools conduct health screenings to identify students who may need additional services or accommodations. (EC §§49452.5–49452.8, 49455)

Screening Type	Grades Tested	Purpose
Vision	K, 2nd, 5th, 8th, new students	Distance and near vision
Hearing	K, 2nd, 5th, 8th, new students	Sound frequency detection
Scoliosis	7th grade	Spine curvature
Oral Health	K or 1st grade (first year)	Dental health assessment

Parents receive written notification if follow-up care is recommended. You may exempt your child by submitting an annual written statement.

Communicable Disease Control

Schools work with health departments to prevent and control infectious diseases. Following are minimum guidelines GUSD school personnel follow and request families to follow.

As a general practice, the Gilroy Unified School District uses the following criteria when deciding on when students should be excluded from the learning environment:

- The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in routine activities.
- The ill child requires more care than staff is able to provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- The child poses a risk of spreading a harmful disease to others.

Keep Child Home When	Return to School When
Fever of 100˚F or higher	Fever-free without medication

Keep Child Home When	Return to School When
Vomiting or diarrhea	Symptom-free without medication
Persistent cough with fever	Healthcare provider clearance
Rash of unknown cause	Healthcare provider clearance
Mouth sores with drooling	Healthcare provider clearance
Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as unusual tiredness, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, difficulty breathing, or severe abdominal pain.	Healthcare provider clearance
Pink eye with discharge	Treatment started and cleared by healthcare provider
Head lice	Treatment completed
Positive COVID-19 (or influenza) test along with symptoms	Symptoms are mild and improving
A child's medical provider advises to stay home due to illness and/or medical concern.	Healthcare provider clearance

During disease outbreaks, unvaccinated students may be excluded for their protection and the protection of others based on California Health and Safety Code (§§ 120325–120380) and Education Code (EC §48213).

Health Office: Contact your school's office if you have questions about whether your child should attend school when feeling unwell with any of the symptoms listed above.

Insurance and Student Injuries

Gilroy Unified School District does not provide medical or accident insurance for individual students. Families are responsible for costs beyond first aid given at school. Low-cost student accident insurance is available for purchase; information is in school offices and on the district website. A low-cost insurance program application can be found at www.peisurance.com. (EC §49472)

In case of a medical emergency when parents/guardians cannot be reached, school personnel are authorized to seek emergency medical treatment for your child. You will be contacted immediately. Please keep emergency contact information current.

Mental Health Services

GUSD schools support students to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally and can provide information to parents/guardians with information about how to access mental health services through local agencies. Parents/guardians can contact their school site principal, counselor or the GUSD Student Services Department for more information to access services outside of school (EC §49428).

In the limited situations where GUSD is able to provide counseling and support services within the school day, every effort will be made to collaborate with parents/guardians to support student success and well-being. Parents/guardians have the right to be informed of the counselor's role and the confidential nature of the counseling relationship between the counselor and student.

Examples of services provided in GUSD on a limited basis:

- School counselors and psychologists
- Crisis intervention and support
- Referrals to community mental health services
- Social-emotional learning programs
- Peer support and conflict resolution
- Wellness Centers (Secondary Sites)

How to access services:

- Contact your child's teacher, counselor, or administrator
- Ask about community partnerships and resources to access resources outside of GUSD

Crisis situations: Contact your local emergency services. You can notify school after emergency services have responded to your crisis and the school can work with you to make a plan for your student.

> 🤝 **Support Available:** Mental health challenges are common and treatable. Don't hesitate to reach out when your child or family needs support.

Safe Storage of Firearms and Child Access Prevention Laws

California law requires schools to annually inform parents and guardians about laws regarding the safe storage of firearms and prevention of child access to firearms.

Under **California Penal Code sections 25100–25135 and 25200–25220**, a person commits a crime if they keep a firearm where a child can access it and the child does any of the following:

- Gains access to the firearm and causes injury or death to themselves or another person.
- Gains access to the firearm and carries it to a public place, including a school or school-sponsored event.

To comply with these laws and prevent tragedies:

- **Firearms must be stored in a locked container or secured with a locking device** when not in use, especially in homes where children live or visit.
- Storing a firearm in a way that allows a child to access it may result in **criminal charges, fines, and civil liability**.

Families are strongly encouraged to review these requirements and ensure all firearms are stored safely and securely. For additional information, visit the **California Department of Education's School Safety Resources** page: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/

🔒 **Prevention:** Proper firearm storage is the most effective way to prevent tragic accidents and protect all children in your community.

Questions about health and safety? Contact your school's health office or main office. For mental health resources, call 988 for the National Suicide and Crisis Prevention Lifeline.

Megan's Law- Sex Offender Registry

California law (Penal Code § 290.46) allows public access to information about registered sex offenders. Families may view this information on the California Department of Justice's Megan's Law website at www.meganslaw.ca.gov or at local law enforcement offices.

Nutrition and Wellness

Good nutrition supports student learning and overall health. This section explains meal programs, wellness initiatives, and how to access food services at school. Beginning in 2022-2023, California became the first state to implement a statewide Universal Meals Program for school children. California's Universal Meals Program (Universal Meals) is designed to build on the foundations of the federal National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).

One (1) FREE breakfast and one (1) FREE lunch are provided every day at all district schools for all enrolled students. Additional (second meals) are available to students to purchase.

Universal Benefit Application

Breakfast and lunch are provided free for all students. However, completing the lunch application will lead to higher funding levels for our schools. Parents/guardians are encouraged to complete a meal application through a confidential application process.

How to apply:

- Complete a meal application (sent home first week of school with each student)
- Applications are available at school offices, from food services staff or online at LINQ Connect website: https://linqconnect.com/public/meal-application/new
- Only one (1) application is required per family
- Applications are processed confidentially
- Applications are accepted anytime throughout the year and benefits begin as soon as eligibility is determined

Benefits beyond meals:

- Qualification may provide discounts for field trips, other school activities & fees
- Data helps schools receive additional federal funding for educational programs
- Information is kept confidential

The Universal Benefit Application will automatically qualify eligible families for Sunbucks, providing $40 per month for food in June, July, and August ($120 total) when children do not have access to school meals.

Eligibility determination:

- **Free meals:** Families at or below 130% of federal poverty guidelines
- **Reduced-price meals:** Families between 130% and 185% of federal poverty guidelines
- **Automatic eligibility:** Families receiving SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR benefits

Household Size	Free Meals (≤ 130% FPL)	Reduced-Price Meals (≤ 185% FPL)
1	$20,748	$29,526
2	$28,132	$40,034
3	$35,516	$50,542
4	$42,900	$61,050
5	$50,284	$71,558
6	$57,668	$82,066
7	$65,052	$92,574
8	$72,436	$103,082

For households with more than eight (8) members, add $7,384 for each additional person for free meals or $10,508 for reduced-price meals.

> 📝 **Apply Even If Unsure:** Income guidelines change annually, and family circumstances can change during the year. It's always worth applying.

School Wellness Policy

The district promotes student health and wellness through comprehensive nutrition education, physical activity, and healthy school environments.

Nutrition education:

- Integrated into classroom curriculum at all grade levels
- Teaches students about healthy food choices and eating habits
- Includes hands-on learning experiences like school gardens when possible

Physical activity requirements:

- **Elementary students:** Minimum 200 minutes of physical education every 10 school days
- **Middle school students:** Minimum 400 minutes of physical education every 10 school days
- **Daily:** Opportunities for physical activity beyond PE class

Healthy school environment:

- Nutritious meal options that meet federal and state standards
- Access to free drinking water throughout the school day
- Limits on competitive food sales during meal periods
- Celebrations and rewards that don't center around food when possible

Community involvement:

- Parents and community members participate in wellness policy development
- Regular assessment of policy implementation and effectiveness
- Opportunities for feedback on wellness initiatives

To view the full and current GUSD Board Policy on Student Wellness see BP 5030 (View Policy 5030: Student Wellness)

> 🥗 **Beyond the Cafeteria:** At GUSD, wellness extends into every part of the school day - from classroom lessons about nutrition and mental health to gardens where students grow their own vegetables, and physical activity breaks that help students focus and learn better.

Special dietary needs:

- Accommodations provided for students with food allergies or medical dietary restrictions
- Documentation from healthcare provider required
- Vegetarian and other dietary preference options available when possible
- Families must complete a Parental Request for Fluid Milk Substitution form for non-disability milk substitute requests

All meal programs follow USDA nutrition standards and food safety requirements (USDA SP-46-2016).

Food service contact information:

- Online meal account management: https://linqconnect.com/main
- Food service office phone:669-205-4075
- Questions about eligibility or applications: arcelia.franco@gilroyunified.org or call 669-205-4075

Questions about nutrition and wellness? Contact your school's food service manager or the district's nutrition services department. Free meal applications and account management tools are available on the district website.

Academic Programs and Assessments

GUSD offers a variety of academic programs and assessments to help every student prepare for high school graduation, college, and future careers. This section explains graduation requirements, college and career readiness programs (including A–G requirements and Career Technical Education), assessments (statewide and local), academic support options, and advanced learning opportunities. Use this section to help plan your student's courses each year and track graduation credits, required tests and testing dates, and programs that may support your student's goals.

Statewide Testing

California requires students to participate in state assessments to measure academic progress and school effectiveness. These tests help teachers, schools, and families understand how students are learning.

Required State Tests

Test Name	Grades	Subjects	Purpose
CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress)	3-8, 11	English Language Arts, Mathematics	Measures progress toward college and career readiness
ELPAC (English Language Proficiency Assessments for California)	K-12	English Language Development	Determines English learner classification and progress

Test Name	Grades	Subjects	Purpose
CAST (California Science Test)	5, 8 and once in high school	Science	Assesses understanding of science standards

Parent Rights Regarding Testing

Parents can request in writing to excuse their student from CAASPP tests. ELPAC testing, which is required for English learners, cannot be opted out of. Test results will be shared with families and added to your student's record. Schools are not allowed to encourage or solicit opt-out requests.

How Test Results are Used

Test results give teachers, schools, and families important insight into how students are learning. They highlight both areas of strength and areas where extra support may be needed, helping teachers plan lessons, and identify when targeted help or enrichment would be beneficial. Schools also use these results to guide improvement efforts, meet state and federal requirements, and ensure resources are directed where they are most needed. For families, assessment data can help track progress in a student's learning over time and support smooth transitions as a student matriculates to the next grade level.

> 📊 **Understanding Results:** Test scores are just one measure of your student's progress. Teachers use multiple forms of assessment throughout the year to support student's learning. Ask your student's teacher/s about the different measures of progress that they use.

High School Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements help ensure students receive a well-rounded education and are ready for college, career, or other post–high school opportunities. To graduate, students must complete required coursework and earn 220 credits, meeting both state and district standards (EC §51225.3; BP 6146.1), which includes 80 hours of completed and verified community service hours. Families should meet with their student's Academic Coordinator each year to review credit totals, course plans, and progress toward graduation.

Comprehensive High School Graduation Requirements

To earn a high school diploma from GUSD, students must complete 220 credits in required subject areas during grades 9–12 (BP 6146.1). Counselors review these requirements with students and families during course selection each year. Students are encouraged to understand which courses they need for graduation and take an active role in planning and tracking their progress.

Subject Area	Credits	GUSD Diploma Requirements
English	40	Four (4) years
Mathematics	30	Three (3) years (including Algebra I; three years in GUSD consists of Integrated Math 1, 2 and 3, moving to Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 (for the Class of 2030)
Science	30	Three (3) years (including two (2) years of lab sciences, one biological sciences and one physical sciences)
Social Science	30 35 (2030) 40 (2031)	Three (3) years (including US History, World History, one (1) semester course in American Government, one (1) semester in Economics); and Starting with the • Class of 2030, one (1) semester course in Ethnic Studies. • Class of 2031, one (1) semester course in Financial Literacy

Subject Area	Credits	GUSD Diploma Requirements
World Language	20	Two (2) years
Physical Education	20	Two (2) years
Visual or Performing Arts	10	One (1) year
Electives	30	For 2029-2030 and beyond, this will be a 25 credit requirement
Career Technical Education	10	One (1) year
TOTAL CREDITS	**220**	
Community Service (80 hours)	Students must also fulfill the 80-hour community service requirement to qualify for a diploma within GUSD.	

*Beginning with the Class of 2030, students will need a one-semester course in Ethnic Studies for a diploma; Beginning with the Class of 2031, students will need a one-semester course in Financial Literacy for a diploma (EC §51225.3).

Continuation High School Graduation Requirements

To graduate from GUSD's Mt. Madonna Continuation High School, students must complete **182 total credits** (grades 9–12). Beginning with the **Class of 2029–30**, students must also complete a **one (1) semester course in Ethnic Studies** and meet revised elective credit requirements. *(EC §51225.3)*

Subject Area	Credits Required	Details
English Language Arts	40 credits	Four (4) years of English

Mathematics	20 credits	Integrated Math I, II, III (Common Core)
Science	20 credits	Includes one (1) year Life Science and one (1) year Physical Science, both with labs
Social Studies	30 credits	U.S. History and Geography; World History, Culture, and Geography; one (1) semester American Government and Civics; one (1) semester Economics
Fine Arts or World Language	10 credits	One (1) year in either subject
Physical Education	20 credits	Two (2) years, unless exempted under other Education Code sections
Ethnic Studies *(starting 2029-30)*	5 credits	One (1) semester required for graduation beginning with the Class of 2029–30
Senior Portfolio	2 credits	Completion of portfolio project
Electives	35 credits (30 credits starting 2029-30)	Three and half (3.5) years flexible courses to meet student interests and needs

Early College High School Graduation Requirements

To graduate from GUSD's Dr. TJ Owens Early College Academy, students must complete **275 total credits** (grades 9–12) and a **senior project**. This includes at least **40 college units** (equivalent to 133 high school credits), excluding Advanced Placement (AP) credit conversions.

Subject Area	Credits / Units Required	Details
English Language Arts	50 credits (includes ten (10) college credits)	Ten (10) Freshman Honors English; ten (10) Sophomore Honors English; ten (10) Junior AP English; ten (10) College English 1A (may be met with AP English score of 3–5)
History / Social Science	30 credits	Ten (10) AP World History; ten (10) AP U.S. History; five (5) AP American Government; five (5) AP Economics
Mathematics	40 credits (includes 10–30 college credits)	Integrated Math I, II, III (Honors); College Pre-Calculus or Statistics minimum
Science	30 credits	Ten (10) Honors Biology; ten (10) Honors Chemistry; ten (10) College Science Elective
Language Other Than English	30 college credits	College-level coursework in a world language
Visual & Performing Arts	10 college credits	College-level coursework
Vocational Education	5 college credits	College-level coursework
Physical Education	20 credits	Ten (10) PE; ten (10) College Kinesiology
Electives	60 credits (includes 12+ college credits)	28 Academic Prep; 10–40 Seminar; 12+ College Elective Coursework; ten (10) Senior Project; (Includes 10 credits of Ethnic Studies requirement for students, beginning with the Class of 2030)

Community Service Graduation Requirement

All GUSD high school students must complete a minimum of 80-hours of community service in order to graduate. (BP 6146.1(a) Community service hours must be completed no later than May 1st of the student's senior year. This requirement reflects the district's commitment to civic engagement and encourages students to contribute to their local community in meaningful ways.

Students who exceed the minimum requirement receive additional recognition:

- 160 hours or more: Eligible to wear a special cord at graduation ceremonies
- Top 5% of service hours (160+ minimum): Honored at a special GUSD Board of Education recognition event

Annual Progress and Eligibility for Activities

Beginning with the Class of 2024, students must complete 20 hours of community service per year by May 1st to remain eligible for high school-sponsored events such as prom, winter ball, and athletic participation. Hours are cumulative and students are encouraged to track progress regularly. Community Service Coordinators provide updates and guidance. Progress checks are shared through school counseling offices and posted on each high school's website. For seniors, all 80 hours must be completed by May 1st of their senior year.

Approved Service and Verification

Community service must be performed with nonprofit organizations listed on the school's pre-approved agency list. All work must occur outside of regular school hours and cannot be paid. Service for parents or relatives does not qualify as community service. Hours related to high school club or team meetings, rehearsals, or performances are not eligible unless the activity results in direct community service (e.g., organizing a Relay for Life event).

Students must use the official GUSD Community Service Timesheet, which requires a signature from a parent/guardian and the supervising organization. The organization may decline to sign if the student's work performance was unsatisfactory. Completed hours must be submitted within 30 days of service for credit.

Categories and Hour Distribution

To meet the 80-hour graduation requirement, students must complete community service hours in more than one area of need. Specifically, they are required to complete at least ten (10) hours in two (2) or more different categories. Approved categories include service with senior citizens, young children, or individuals with disabilities; school-related projects; environmental initiatives; programs supporting individuals experiencing homelessness; literacy and tutoring efforts; animal care; activities that promote health and physical fitness; and opportunities that support arts and cultural programs. This structure ensures students gain a range of experiences and contribute to different parts of the community. The GUSD website section on Community Service can be accessed via (GUSD Community Service Requirements) on the GUSD website.

Transfer Students

Students who transfer into GUSD will have their community service hours prorated at 20 hours per year (five (5) hours per quarter). Hours completed at previous schools may count toward the GUSD requirement if documentation meets district standards and is approved by the school site.

Finding Opportunities and Support

A Community Service Coordinator at each high school will assist students in selecting approved opportunities and verifying hours. Updated volunteer opportunities, approved agency lists, and detailed requirements are available on the individual high school websites. Families are encouraged to contact the coordinator with any questions.

Community Service Hours
Students must complete community service to graduate and to stay eligible for school activities. Hours must be completed with an approved GUSD partner at a non-profit (see website for details).

- **80-hours total** required for graduation (due by May 1st of student's senior year)
- **20-hours per year** required to participate in dances, athletics, and other events
- **160+ hours** earns a graduation cord; top 5% of service hours are honored by the Board of Education

For approved agencies and tracking forms, visit your school's website or contact the Community Service Coordinator.

College Readiness — Financial Aid Requirement

Planning for life after high school includes making sure your child has access to all possible college funding. One important step is completing the financial aid application required by California law (EC § 51225.7).

California requires that every graduating senior complete and submit either of the following (unless the student qualifies for an exemption or submits a signed opt-out form by annual opt-out deadline):

- The **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), or
- The **CADAA** (California Dream Act Application)

Why this is important:

- These forms determine eligibility for a wide range of financial aid, including grants, scholarships, work study, and some loan programs
- Completing an application keeps all funding options open, even if you believe your family may not qualify for need based aid or is not currently considering post-high school studies

What families should know:

- Not submitting an application may reduce access to certain college funding opportunities, including local or state Promise Programs
- Students who opt-out can still apply for financial aid later. Opting-out does not remove future eligibility.

College Admission and Career Readiness

Course Selections to Meet Four-Year College Admissions Requirements

Students who would like to apply directly to a four-year college or university following high school will need to take specific courses to meet graduation requirements. These are called the A-G list. Courses are approved to the A-G list by the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) system. Students must take courses to meet credit requirements that are on the approved A-G list and earn a grade of “C” or higher to be eligible to count for college admissions. In contrast, a grade of “D” is considered passing for GUSD diploma requirements.

UC/CSU Requirement Area	Details
A-G College-Prep Courses	✅ Complete **15 courses**, including: (A) Two (2) years History/Social Science• (B) Four (4) years English• (C) Three (3) years Math (Algebra, Geometry, etc/ Math 1, Math 2, Math 3) (D) Two (2) years Science (lab-based) (E) Two (2) years World Language (F) One (1) year Arts (G) 1 elective (e.g. computer science, economics)
Timing of Courses	At least **11 of the 15 courses** must be completed **by the end of 11th grade**
Grades/GP	For UC: Earn a **3.0 GPA** or higher in A-G courses taken during **10th and 11th grades** (no grade lower than a C) For CSU: Earn a **2.5 GPA** or higher in A-G courses taken during **10th and 11th grades** (no grade lower than a C)
Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC)	If the student ranks in the **top 9%** of their graduating class (based on academic performance in the 11 A-G courses), they gain a spot at a UC campus—regardless of which one they apply to

CSU Direct Admissions Program

Gilroy Unified School District is partnering with the California State University (CSU) to help students access college opportunities through a Direct Admissions program. As part of this program, the District may share limited student information with CSU to:

- Determine CSU admission eligibility,
- Notify students of admission opportunities, and
- Provide information about enrollment, financial aid, and support services.

Information that may be shared includes student name, contact information, date of birth, student ID (SSID), school information, and basic demographic and eligibility data. Parent/guardian contact information may also be included.

Federal law (FERPA) permits schools to share this information with CSU for college enrollment purposes without prior consent if parents/students are provided an ability to opt out of sharing this information in the school's annual notice.

You may opt out of this program. If you do not want your student's information shared, please notify your School Counselor/Academic Coordinator by August 30.

- If you do not opt out, your student's information may be shared as described.
- If you have questions or would like a copy of the information shared, please contact your School Counselor/Academic Coordinator.

College Entrance Exams (SAT/ACT)

Both the University of California and the California State University system do not require entrance exams. Students can still take them and submit them as additional information in their college application. Other colleges and universities might include them as well, so all students and their parents/guardians should review requirements early in the high school career. The most common entrance exams are the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT). More information on planning for college entrance can be found at the high school counseling office.

12th Grade GPA Submission (Cal Grant)

GUSD will automatically submit the GPA of all 12th grade students to the California Student Aid Commission by October 1st, for the Cal Grant financial aid process. If you wish to opt-out of this automatic GPA submission, please contact your high school Academic Coordinator/Counselor by August 30th of the current academic year.

California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI)

GUSD partners with the California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI) to help students plan for college and career after high school. Through CCGI, students can track A–G course requirement progress and plan for college and career. To opt-out of sharing student data with CCGI, contact your high school Academic Coordinator.

Planning for success:

- Meet with school counselors annually to review graduation progress
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during senior year
- Take advantage of college and career planning resources
- Consider advanced coursework to strengthen college applications

Students and families should plan coursework carefully to meet both graduation and college admission requirements (EC §§51225.3, 51229).

> 🎓 **Planning Ahead:** Begin planning for post-secondary education early. Course selections in 9th and 10th grade impact options for advanced classes in later years. Work with your school counselor to ensure your student meets both graduation and college admission requirements.

Advanced Learning Opportunities

GUSD offers multiple pathways for students to challenge themselves academically and earn college credit while in high school. The following table includes the programs, a description and details about that program.

Program	Description	Key Benefits	Eligibility / Notes
Advanced Placement (AP) Courses	• College-level courses, anchored to national standards, taught at the high school by qualified teachers. • Students take AP exams each May; Exam scores of 3 or higher may earn college credit. • An additional grade point is given for grades of "C" or higher when calculating GPA with passing exam.	• Potential college credit • Weighted GPA boost (grades C or higher) • Available in English, math, science, social studies, world languages	• Open to qualified students • Some fees apply; waivers available for eligible families

Honors Courses	• Accelerated versions of core academic subjects that prepare students for AP and advanced coursework.	• Weighted GPA boost • Builds strong academic foundation for college readiness	• Open to students meeting course prerequisites • Offered in most subject areas
Dual Enrollment	• Students take college courses at Gavilan College or other community colleges, earning both high school and college credit. Courses typically occur outside the high school day.	• Earn college credit early • Explore career or academic interests • Strengthen college applications	• Must meet college eligibility requirements • Transportation is student responsibility
Gilroy Early College Academy (GECA)	• Early college high school located on the Gavilan College campus. Students begin in 9th grade and complete high school and college courses simultaneously.	• Up to two years of transferable college credit (or Associate Degree) • No tuition cost for college courses • Small, supportive learning environment	• Admission by application in 8th grade • October: information nights and application opens for December deadline

Benefits of advanced coursework:

- Strengthen college applications and scholarship opportunities
- Develop time management and study skills for college success
- Explore potential college majors and career interests
- Save time and money on future college coursework

🗓️ **Plan ahead.** These programs have different timelines, prerequisites, and application steps. Start exploring options with your student's counselor early, ideally in 8th or 9th grade. Contact your school counselor to discuss which advanced learning options best fit your student's goals and interests (EC §48980.6).

State Seal of Biliteracy

The State Seal of Biliteracy honors graduating seniors who have achieved proficiency in English and at least one other language. To qualify, students must meet specific academic, assessment, and language proficiency requirements set by the state. Award recipients receive a certificate, a gold seal on their diploma, and a notation on their transcript. For eligibility details and application information, visit the Gilroy Unified School District website at: **www.gilroyunified.org/departments/educational-services**.

State Seal of Civic Engagement

The California Seal of Civic Engagement is a diploma distinction awarded to graduating high school students who demonstrate excellence in civic knowledge, leadership, and community involvement during their four years in high school. It recognizes students who have shown a commitment to making a positive impact through informed civic participation, service, and an understanding of democratic principles and government. For eligibility details and application information, contact your Academic Coordinator.

Career Technical Education (CTE)

Career Technical Education (CTE) programs give students the chance to explore careers, develop hands-on skills, and prepare for both college and the workforce. These programs combine academic instruction with technical training in high-demand industries. Students can begin CTE pathways in high school and continue into community college or university programs.

CTE Program Areas in GUSD

Gilroy Unified School District offers multiple CTE pathways aligned with California's 15 industry sectors. The exact programs may vary by school site and are updated based on local labor market needs.

Benefits of CTE Pathways

CTE pathways are designed to connect classroom learning with real-world careers. Students gain practical experience and credentials that employers and colleges value.

Key Benefits

- **Hands-on learning:** Apply academic concepts to real projects, labs, or industry-standard equipment
- **Industry-recognized certifications:** Opportunities to earn certifications that can lead to immediate employment
- **Career and college readiness:** Prepares students for technical careers or further education in four-year colleges
- **Work-based learning:** Internships, job shadowing, and workplace visits with local employers
- **Flexible planning:** Many CTE courses also satisfy high school graduation requirements

How CTE Supports Graduation and College Preparation

- CTE courses can fulfill graduation requirements in areas such as science, mathematics, and electives (per EC §51225.3)
- Many pathways integrate advanced academic content (e.g., engineering courses may include higher-level math)
- Students may combine CTE with Advanced Placement (AP) or college preparatory courses to create a robust academic plan
- Participation in CTE demonstrates career readiness and strengthens college applications

Questions about academic programs? Contact your school counselor or the district's curriculum and instruction department. Information about specific programs, course offerings, and enrollment requirements is available on school websites and through counseling offices.

Special Programs

GUSD offers specialized programs to meet the unique learning needs and circumstances of students. These programs provide additional academic support, flexible learning options, and opportunities for advanced study.

Dual Immersion

Gilroy Unified School District offers a Spanish-English Dual Immersion Program that begins in transitional kindergarten and continues through 12th grade. This program is open to both

native Spanish speakers and native English speakers, with the goal of developing strong skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in both languages. Instruction follows a 90:10 model in TK, and a 50:50 model in the early grades (50% in Spanish and 50% in English). Students learn core subjects in both languages while also building cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Families interested in enrolling must complete the district's registration process and may need to attend an informational meeting. The program prepares students to become bilingual, biliterate, and culturally competent, opening doors for future academic and career opportunities. For more information, see the GUSD website page on Dual Immersion.

Early Childhood Education (Preschool)

Gilroy Unified School District offers high-quality early learning opportunities through its State Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten (TK) programs.

- State Preschool is free for income-eligible families and focuses on building early literacy, math, and social-emotional skills in a supportive, play-based environment.
- Transitional Kinder (TK) is for children who turn 4 on or before September 1, 2025 (inclusive of this date) are eligible to attend TK in the 2025–26 school year. TK provides a full-day program that bridges preschool and kindergarten. Families may also choose a Dual Immersion TK option at Glen View Elementary, where students begin Spanish–English bilingual learning that can continue through 8th grade. (BP 6170.1)

All programs are taught by qualified teachers and emphasize social, emotional, and academic growth. Families can learn more about eligibility, locations, and enrollment on the district's website on both the Early Childhood Education and Transitional Kindergarten webpages..

Home Hospital Instruction

Gilroy Unified School District provides home or hospital instruction by certificated teachers for students who cannot attend school due to a temporary illness or injury lasting at least two weeks. Students may qualify if they:

- Are enrolled in grades K–12 and live within GUSD boundaries.
- Live outside GUSD boundaries, but are temporarily hospitalized within the district.

- Live within GUSD boundaries, attend a private or parochial school, and are registered at a GUSD school during the period of instruction.

A medical doctor's documentation of the diagnosed illness or condition is required. For forms, program details, or to request services, visit the Student Services section of the district website or contact the Health Services Department.

Independent Study

Independent Study provides a flexible alternative for students who cannot attend traditional classes due to family circumstances, medical needs, or extended travel. Students must meet **all graduation requirements**, and all contracts follow strict state guidelines. (EC §§46300, 51747) There are two forms of Independent Study: short term (fewer than 16 days) and long-term as an alternative course of study.

Short-Term Independent Study

- Designed for temporary absences such as family emergencies
- Contracts for 1-15 school days; may not exceed 15 total days per school year
- Must be requested and approved on the day of or before the absence (recommend requesting a minimum of one week in advance of absence); contracts are not typically approved during the first or last week of each semester/trimester
- All assignments must be completed and returned within one week of returning to school; finals must be taken on campus
- The parent/guardian is responsible for supervising student work

Contracts are not approved if the student:

- Has received notices of truancy
- Has two (2) or more failing grades in middle or high school
- Did not complete a prior Independent Study contract

Virtual Learning Academy (VLA)

The Virtual Learning Academy (VLA) is GUSD's long-term Independent Study option for students in grades 9–12. Using courseware (Edmentum), students complete coursework online at their own pace while meeting California State Standards. Parents or guardians

provide daily supervision, and GUSD teachers and administrators offer guidance and monitor progress. Participation requires a signed learning agreement; agreements for 16 days or more must be signed before the program begins, and agreements for shorter participation must be signed within the same school year.

📝 **Extended Absence:** If your family anticipates an extended absence, request a short-term Independent Study contract early to allow time for approval and assignment preparation.

💻**Virtual Learning Academy:** For high school students seeking a long-term online option, contact your school counselor to learn about the Virtual Learning Academy enrollment process and requirements.

Migrant Education Program

The Migrant Education Program (MEP) supports students whose families move for seasonal work in one of the following industries: agriculture, nursery, fishing, or dairy. The program helps reduce educational disruption caused by frequent moves and provides supplemental academic, health, and family support so students can stay on track toward graduation.

Eligibility

Students under 22 years old who have moved in the past 36 months for seasonal agriculture, nursery, fishing or dairy work may be eligible for Migrant Education Program and services.

Example of Services Provided might include:

- Academic Support: Tutoring, extended day support, preschool readiness, and summer academic programs
- Health Services Support: Signing up for health insurance, connections to vision screenings, mobile dental or medical clinics, and community agencies
- Parent Involvement and Leadership Development: Workshops, family literacy events, adult English classes in partnership with community organizations, and leadership opportunities through the Migrant Parent Advisory Committee

📝**Parent Tip:** If your family moves for, tell your school or call the Migrant Education office at **(669) 205-4045**. This helps your student get extra support, like tutoring and health services, without delays.

Adult Education

Gilroy Unified School District (GUSD) offers adult education through its partnership with the Gavilan Regional ACES consortium. Programs available to regional residents include a High School Diploma Program, Adult Basic Education (Math and English), ESL I and II, and test preparation for the High School Equivalency. For program details visit **www.gilroyunified.org/enrollment-registration/adult-education**.

Promotion and Retention

GUSD expects students to move forward one grade level each school year by meeting grade-level learning standards. Instruction is designed to support different learning needs and provide additional help when students experience academic challenges.

Identification for Retention

- Students may be identified for possible retention based on grades and other academic measures, including district diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments (EC §48070.6)
- The district works to identify students as early as possible in the school year who may need retention
- Students in grades K–9 will not be retained for more than one school year. If a student is retained, they will continue to receive additional support programs to help them make academic progress
- Students in grades 2-9 who are retained, or recommended for retention, will receive direct and intensive supplemental instruction (EC §37252.2)
- If a student is performing below the minimum standard for promotion, retention may occur unless the teacher provides written documentation explaining why retention is not appropriate and suggesting alternative interventions (EC §48070.5)

Middle School (Grades 6–8)

- Families are notified as soon as possible, and no later than the end of the first grading period, if their student is not making expected progress toward promotion
- A variety of academic support programs are offered to help students meet grade-level standards

High School (Grades 9–12)

Promotion between grade levels is based on the number of credits earned toward the 220 credits required for graduation. Students must meet the following minimum credits for class standing:

Class Standing at Start of School Year	Minimum Credits Earned
Sophomore (10th grade)	60 credits
Junior (11th grade)	120 credits
Senior (12th grade)	180 credits

- Families are notified each grading period if a student is not making adequate progress toward graduation
- Support programs, such as credit recovery or summer school, are offered to help students stay on track
- Any changes to graduation requirements are communicated in writing by the end of the first semester each year. (Board Policy 6146.6)

A strong academic foundation supports every other part of a student's school experience. By knowing the requirements for graduation, understanding available programs, and using assessments to guide next steps, families can help their students make informed choices year after year. As students continue to grow, they will also need support for their overall well-being, daily routines, and engagement in school life. These are all areas that work hand in hand with academics to help them succeed.

Rights and Protections

GUSD is committed to providing every student a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment. State and federal laws protect students and families from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying, and they guarantee equal access to all district programs and activities — academic and extracurricular.

These protections extend to all students, including those who are English learners, foster youth, homeless students, migrant students, and students who are pregnant or parenting. They apply to conduct on campus, at school-sponsored activities, and off-campus when it creates a hostile or disruptive environment at school.

The following information summarizes key protections and explains how families can access help or file complaints if they believe their rights have been violated. As a reminder, GUSD's Nondiscrimination Policy and Public Notice is included for a second time in this handbook below.

Nondiscrimination Policy and Public Notice

GUSD does not discriminate based on actual or perceived characteristics, including:

- Race, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, or ethnic group identification
- Religion or creed
- Age, marital or parental status, pregnancy
- Physical or mental disability, medical condition, or genetic information
- Sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression

This policy applies to all educational programs, services, activities, and employment practices. Further details on rights and protections is provided in the "Rights and Protections" section of this handbook.

Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator
The district designates the following individual to coordinate compliance with nondiscrimination laws and handle related complaints:

Paul Winslow, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Gilroy Unified School District
7810 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020
Phone: (669) 205-4012
Email: paul.winslow@gilroyunified.org

Retaliation against anyone who reports or participates in an investigation of discrimination or harassment is strictly prohibited.

Title IX Rights and Protections

Title IX is the federal law that prohibits sex-based discrimination in all educational programs and activities. This includes protection against sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, gender-based bullying, and unequal treatment in athletics or academics.

Complaint forms are available at all school offices and on the district website. Investigations follow required timelines and result in a written decision with findings and appeal rights. *(Title IX; EC §221.5, BP4119.12)*

Your Rights Under Title IX	What This Means
Equal access to programs and activities	No student may be excluded from classes, sports, or events due to sex, gender identity, or pregnancy status.
Protection from sexual harassment	Schools must promptly address sexual harassment or gender-based bullying.
Right to file a complaint	Families can file a Title IX complaint with the school principal or the district Title IX Coordinator.

Sexual Harassment Definition as Defined by State Law (EC 212.5; 5 CCR 4916)

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other unwanted verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to the conduct is made a term or condition of a student's academic status or progress.
2. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for academic decisions.
3. The conduct negatively impacts a student's academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.
4. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for decisions about services, honors, programs, or activities.

Sexual Harassment Definition as Defined by Federal Title IX (34 Code of Federal Regulations 106.30)

Sexual harassment under Title IX includes:

1. A district employee conditioning an educational benefit or service on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.
2. Unwelcome conduct that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it denies a student equal access to school programs or activities.
3. Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking.

Prohibited Conduct

The following are examples of types of conduct which are prohibited in the district and which may constitute sexual harassment under state and/or federal law in accordance with definitions above, include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome leering, sexual flirtations, or propositions
- Unwelcome sexual slurs, epithets, threats, verbal abuse, derogatory comments or sexually degrading descriptions
- Graphic verbal comments about an individual's body or overly personal conversation
- Sexual jokes, derogatory posters, notes, stories, cartoons, drawings, pictures, obscene gestures or computer-generated images of a sexual nature
- Spreading sexual rumors
- Teasing or remarks about students enrolled in a predominantly single-sex class
- Massaging, grabbing, fondling, stroking, or brushing the body

- Touching an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way
- Physical interference in any school activity or blocking movement when directed at an individual based on sex
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects
- Sexual assault, sexual battery, or sexual coercion
- Electronic communications containing comments, words or images described above

Reporting and Response

Families may report concerns to their school principal or contact the district's Title IX Coordinator directly. Complaint forms are available at all school offices and on the district website. Investigations follow required timelines and result in a written decision with findings and appeal rights.

Students who believe they have been sexually harassed, whether by another student or an adult, on campus or off campus (if the conduct has a continuing effect at school), are strongly encouraged to report it immediately to a teacher, the principal, the district's Title IX Coordinator, or any other school employee.

- All employees who receive a report or observe an incident must notify the Title IX Coordinator.
- The Title IX Coordinator will address the complaint through Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures (AR 5145.71) or Uniform Complaint Procedures (BP/AR 1312.3), as applicable.
- Supportive measures will be offered to both the complainant and the respondent.

Parents/guardians and students are informed of this policy through annual notifications, the district website, and inclusion in student and staff handbooks. All staff receive training on this policy.

Disciplinary Actions

- Students in grades 4–12 found to have engaged in sexual harassment or sexual violence may face suspension and/or expulsion, taking into account the circumstances of the incident.
- Employees found to have engaged in sexual harassment or sexual violence toward a student are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Quick Help on Topic of Sexual Harassment

Recognize – Sexual harassment can be verbal, visual, physical, or digital. If it is unwelcome and sexual in nature, it may be harassment.
Report – Tell a teacher, principal, counselor, or the **Title IX Coordinator** right away. You can also report on behalf of someone else.
Receive Support – The district will provide supportive measures, investigate, and take action to stop the harassment and prevent it from happening again.

📞 **Title IX Coordinator:** Paul Winslow, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources | (669) 205-4012 | paul.winslow@gilroyunified.org

Rights of Pregnant and Parenting Students

Pregnant and parenting students are entitled to continue their education without discrimination. They may stay enrolled in their regular school program, participate in all classes and activities, and request reasonable accommodations such as time for lactation or prenatal appointments. Students may also request placement in alternative programs, such as Independent Study, if that better supports their needs.

All information related to pregnancy or parenting status is kept confidential and is only shared when legally required *(EC §222.5).*

Hate-Motivated Behavior

GUSD prohibits hate-motivated behavior in all schools and activities. Hate-motivated behavior includes acts intended to cause emotional harm, physical injury, or property damage — such as intimidation, harassment, slurs, threats, or vandalism — when motivated in whole or in part by bias toward a person's actual or perceived characteristics.

Protected characteristics include race, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, ethnic group identification, ethnicity, age, religion, marital or parental status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sex, sexual orientation,

gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by EC §§200, 220; Government Code §11135; or Penal Code §422.55.

The district works to prevent hate-motivated behavior through age-appropriate instruction, staff training, and collaboration with community partners. Students affected by hate-motivated incidents may receive counseling or other support, and students or staff who engage in such behavior may face disciplinary action, including suspension, expulsion, or dismissal when appropriate.

Reporting: Any student, parent/guardian, or staff member who experiences or observes hate-motivated behavior should report it to a teacher, school administrator, or the district compliance officer. Reports may be verbal or written; complaint forms are available at all schools and on the district website. Staff are required to notify the compliance officer immediately, and law enforcement may be contacted when appropriate. Complaints are investigated promptly and addressed according to the Uniform Complaint Procedures (AR 1312.3).

For full details about prevention, staff responsibilities, and complaint processes, refer to Board Policy 5145.9: Hate-Motivated Behavior.

Rights of Foster Youth, Students Experiencing Homelessness, Unaccompanied Youth, and Migrant Program Students

Some students are entitled to additional protections to ensure stability in their education *(EC §§48850–48859; McKinney-Vento Act).*

Foster Youth

- May remain in their school of origin even if their foster placement changes
- Can enroll immediately in a new school without typical documentation (residency, immunization, or transcript records)
- Receive support from a district liaison who coordinates services and monitors academic progress

Students Experiencing Homelessness and/or Unaccompanied Youth (McKinney-Vento Act)

- May remain in their school of origin or enroll in a new school immediately, even without documents
- Have access to free school meals, transportation, and support services
- Are entitled to protections that minimize disruption to their education

Migrant Program Students

- Receive supplemental educational and support services to address frequent school changes related to seasonal agricultural or fishing work
- Have access to tutoring, health services, and parent involvement opportunities through GUSD's Migrant Education Program

Language Access and English Learner Programs

Families who speak a language other than English have the right to receive important school information in a language they understand. English learners are entitled to programs that help them develop English proficiency while continuing grade-level academic learning. *(EC §313).*

Parents/guardians of students who are identified as English Learners may request enrollment in one of the following programs:

Structured English Immersion (SEI) Instruction is almost entirely in English with primary language support and other services as needed. English Language Development (ELD) is provided daily. Instructional materials are matched to student needs and include print, audio, visual, graphic, and electronic resources.

Dual Immersion (DI) - A dual-language education program in which native English speakers and native Spanish speakers are integrated for academic content instruction through both English and Spanish. Instruction is at least 50% in Spanish. Students begin the program in transitional kindergarten in elementary school and can continue through 12th grade.

Parents/Guardians who wish to have their child taught in Spanish and English must follow district Dual Immersion enrollment procedures. Placement is based on eligibility criteria. More information and deadlines can be found on the website: [Dual Immersion Program - Gilroy Unified School District 2022]

Key Rights

- Access to translation of essential documents and interpretation services for meetings
- Placement in English Language Development (ELD) programs (either Structured Language Immersion(SEI) or Dual Immersion (DI) appropriate for the student's proficiency level
- Annual English proficiency testing (ELPAC) to measure growth and adjust support.

Families may request translation or interpretation services from their school office at any time during the school year. These services are provided at no cost.

> 🛡️ If your student experiences discrimination, bullying, or barriers to participation, for any reason, contact your school principal or the district's compliance office right away. Addressing concerns early helps ensure your child receives timely support and the protections guaranteed by law.

Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP)

The Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) provide a formal process for resolving complaints about discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and violations of state or federal education laws. GUSD follows timelines set by law to investigate complaints and provide families with written decisions.

When to Use the UCP

Families can use the UCP to address complaints involving:

- Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying based on protected characteristics

- Violations of state or federal laws governing programs funded by the state or federal government
- Failure to provide services for English learners, foster youth, homeless students, or migrant students
- Disputes regarding school fees, textbooks, instructional materials, or other mandated services
- Complaints related to accommodations for pregnant or parenting students

The district's Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) are used to investigate and resolve complaints regarding the following specific programs and activities:

1. **Accommodations for pregnant and parenting students** (EC §46015)
2. **Adult education programs** (EC §8500-8538, 52334.7, 52500-52617)
3. **After School Education and Safety programs** (EC §8482-8484.65)
4. **Agricultural career technical education** (EC §52460-52462)
5. **Career technical and technical education/training programs** (EC §52300-52462)
6. **Child care and development programs** (EC §8200-8498)
7. **Compensatory education** (EC *§54461*)
8. **Consolidated categorical aid programs** (EC §33315; 34 CFR 299.10-299.12)
9. **Course periods without educational content** – when students in grades 9-12 are assigned to such courses more than one week in a semester, or to a previously completed course, unless specified conditions are met (EC §51228.1-51228.3)
10. **Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying** in district programs and activities (including those funded by or benefiting from state financial assistance) based on actual or perceived characteristics such as race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, nationality, immigration status, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, disability, medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, genetic information, or association with a person or group with these characteristics (EC §54400; 5 CCR 4610)
11. **Educational and graduation requirements** for foster youth, homeless students, students from military families, students formerly in a juvenile court school, migrant students, and immigrant students in a newcomer program (EC §§48645.7, 48853, 48853.5, 49069.5, 51225.1, 51225.2)
12. **Every Student Succeeds Act** (EC §52059; 20 USC 6301 et seq.)
13. **Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)** (EC §52075)
14. **Migrant education** (EC §§54440-54445)
15. **Physical education instructional minutes** (EC §§51210, 51222, 51223)
16. **Student fees** (EC §§49010-49013)

17. **Reasonable accommodations to a lactating student** (EC §222)
18. **Regional occupational centers and programs** (EC §§52300-52334.7)
19. **School plans for student achievement** required for the consolidated application for certain state or federal funding (EC §64001)
20. **School safety plans** (EC §§32280-32289)
21. **School Site Councils** required for the consolidated application for certain state or federal funding (EC §65000)
22. **State preschool programs** (EC §§8235-8239.1)
23. **State preschool health and safety issues** in license-exempt programs (EC §8235.5)
24. **Retaliation** against a complainant, participant, or anyone who has acted to uncover or report a violation subject to this policy
25. **Any other state or federal educational program** deemed appropriate by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Protection Against Retaliation and Confidentiality – Complainants are protected from retaliation. Identities are kept confidential as permitted by law and when it does not compromise the integrity of the investigation.

Steps in the Complaint Process

The process is designed to be straightforward and transparent for families:

Step	What Happens	Timeline
1. File a Complaint	Submit a written complaint to the school principal or district compliance officer. Complaint forms are available at all school offices and on the district website.	Within six (6) months of the incident
2. Acknowledge Receipt	The district sends written acknowledgement of the complaint and outlines next steps.	Within five (5) days of receipt
3. Investigation	The district investigates by gathering information, interviewing involved parties, and reviewing evidence.	Completed within 60 calendar days

4. Written Decision	Families receive a written decision explaining findings and any corrective actions.	At conclusion of investigation
5. Appeal (Optional)	Families may appeal to the California Department of Education if they disagree with the outcome.	Within 15 days of decision

Contact for UCP Complaints

Title IX and UCP Coordinator
Paul Winslow, Assistant Superintendent

Human Resources
Gilroy Unified School District
7810 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020
Phone: (669) 205-4000
Email: paul.winslow@gilroyunified.org

Parent Tip: Not sure if your concern qualifies under the UCP? Start by talking with your school principal or the district's compliance officer. They can guide you through your options and help you access the right process.

Special Education and Section 504 Plans

Gilroy Unified School District (GUSD) ensures students with disabilities have access to a **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**. Support is provided through:

- **Special Education** under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- **Section 504 accommodations** under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Both frameworks for educational services and support ensure nondiscrimination and provide the support and accommodations needed for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

Parental Rights in Special Education

(EC §56301; 34 CFR §300.503)

Parents and guardians are active partners in the special education process, who have the right to:

- Request an evaluation if you suspect your child has a disability
- Receive **prior written notice** of any proposed or refused actions related to your child's identification, evaluation, or placement
- Participate in meetings and decisions about your child's program and services
- Review educational records and request translations or alternative formats
- Pursue options for dispute resolution if you disagree with the school district's decision

These rights are summarized in the **Notice of Procedural Safeguards**, a document that is provided when assessments are proposed initially and at least annually for all students

receiving special education services. They can be provided to you in your preferred language.

Special Education Services under IDEA

Eligibility and Evaluation

(EC §56321)

Students qualify for special education when they have one or more of 13 defined disabilities and require specialized instruction to benefit from education.

Evaluation Process

Step	What Happens	Timeline
1. Parent Consent	Written consent must be provided before assessment begins	—
2. Assessment	Comprehensive evaluation in all areas of suspected disability using culturally and linguistically appropriate methods	—
3. Timeline	The district completes evaluation and holds an Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting	Within 60 calendar days (excluding long breaks)
4. IEP Meeting	The team reviews results, determines eligibility, and creates an Individualized Education Program (IEP) if eligible	At initial meeting; reviewed annually

Core Commitments of GUSD's Special Education Program

(EC §56001)

Commitment	Description
Appropriate Education	Meets individual student needs through coursework completion or proficiency standards
Early Intervention	Provides early education for children aged 3–5; services for younger children as required
Least Restrictive Environment	Maximizes participation with nondisabled peers; removal only when necessary
Fair Assessment	Uses culturally and linguistically appropriate procedures
Coordination of Services	Collaborates with public and private agencies, including preschools and regional programs
Qualified Staff	Employs properly trained staff; ongoing professional development provided

Section 504 Plans
(29 USC §794)

Section 504 ensures equal access to education for students with disabilities who do not require special education but need accommodations to participate fully in general education. Students are eligible when they have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity.

Procedural Safeguards and Dispute Resolution
(34 CFR §300.504; BP/AR 6164.6)

Both IDEA and Section 504 guarantee procedural protections for students and families, including:

- The right to **notice** and **consent** before evaluations or changes in placement
- The right to **participate** in meetings and decision-making
- The right to **file complaints** with the California Department of Education or request mediation/due process hearings if disagreements arise
- The right to an **impartial hearing** for disputes regarding identification, evaluation, or placement under Section 504; GUSD maintains a list of qualified, independent hearing officers
- The right to receive notices and documents in your primary language or mode of communication

Coordination with Other Services

Special Education services may involve psychological and health support, speech and occupational therapy, and coordination with agencies, such as regional occupational programs, and community advisory committees. Continuous evaluation of program effectiveness is required at the district and local plan levels to maintain high-quality services.

Special Considerations

- **Graduation Requirements:** Students with IEPs must meet the coursework and exam requirements identified in Board Policy 6146.1. Parents are notified of these requirements at least three years before the student's expected graduation year.

- **Promotion:** Students who meet the academic goals in their IEP may be considered for promotion even if they do not meet district performance criteria on assessments.

- **Temporary Disabilities:** Students with temporary disabilities that make attendance in regular classes inadvisable may be eligible to receive home or hospital instruction under EC §48206.3.

Quick Reference: IDEA vs. Section 504

Feature	IDEA (Special Education)	Section 504 (Accommodations)
Governing Law	IDEA; EC §56000+	Rehabilitation Act §504 (29 USC 794)
Eligibility	One of 13 disability categories + need for specialized instruction	Any disability substantially limiting a major life activity
Services Provided	Specialized instruction and related services	Accommodations only
Plan Type	Individualized Education Program (IEP)	504 Accommodation Plan
Review Frequency	Annual IEP review; triennial evaluation	Periodic review (often every 3 years)

Parent and Guardian Involvement

Families play an important role in student success and school improvement. GUSD invites parents and guardians to share ideas, participate in decision-making, and help shape programs that support every student. These opportunities are guided by California Education Code and federal law (EC §6020; Title I, 20 USC §6318).

School-Level Opportunities

School Site Council (SSC)

Each school has a School Site Council made up of parents, teachers, staff, and, at the middle and high school level, and students.

- The council develops and monitors the School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) and decides how certain state and federal funds are spent
- Meetings are held four to six times per year and are open to all families. Agendas and minutes are posted in advance on the school website and office bulletin board

English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)

Schools with **21 or more English Learner students** must have an ELAC.

- ELAC advises the School Site Council on programs and services for English learners
- The committee reviews the site's English Learner Program Instructional Plan and other school program data. This group helps to inform other families about English learner supports

- Members receive training so they can represent families effectively

Groups for Parents / School Engagement and Booster Groups

Many schools have groups (Home-School Club or Parent-Teacher Club) or booster organizations that plan events, raise funds, and encourage volunteer involvement.

- Membership is open to all families, and meetings are usually scheduled monthly or bi-monthly
- These groups provide a way for parents to connect socially and support school activities beyond decision-making roles

District-Level Opportunities

LCAP Consultation and Feedback

California requires every school district to develop a three-year Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), updated annually, to guide the use of funds provided through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). The LCAP outlines the district's goals, actions, services, and expenditures to improve student outcomes and is built around eight state priorities, including academic achievement, school climate, access to a broad curriculum, and parent engagement. Each spring, families can share feedback through surveys, focus groups, and public meetings. Feedback from parents, community and educators helps shape the next year's plan

The district's budget is aligned to these priorities, and community input is an essential part of the planning process. The current GUSD LCAP and information about how to participate in the public input process are available on the district's website.(EC §52062)

📄 **More information:**
https://www.gilroyunified.org/departments/educational-services/lcap

District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)

This districtwide committee advises district officials on programs and services for English learners.

- DELAC reviews language program plans, reclassification criteria, and parent notifications across the district
- Representatives are chosen from site-level ELAC committees
- Approves the application and plans for certain state and federal funds

Title I Family Engagement Requirements

Schools receiving federal Title I funds must:

- Hold an annual Title I meeting to explain program goals, budgets, and parent rights
- Develop a Parent and Family Engagement Policy and a School-Parent Compact with input from families
- Share these documents with all families at the start of each school year

How to Get Involved

- **Watch for invitations:** Schools send notices about meetings and volunteer opportunities through ParentSquare, email, and paper flyers
- **Attend meetings in person or online:** Interpreters and translated materials are available upon request
- **Volunteer or serve on committees:** Each council or committee has a nomination process; contact your school office to learn about openings
- **Share input year-round:** Feedback is welcome at meetings, by email, or during open comment periods for plans like the LCAP

Why Engagement Matters

When families participate, students benefit in many ways:

- Higher academic achievement and test scores
- Better attendance and motivation

- Stronger connections between home and school
- Programs that better reflect community needs

Your involvement helps ensure school decisions reflect the experiences and priorities of GUSD families.

> **Ask your school about open parent leadership roles at the start of each school year.**
> Serving on the School Site Council, ELAC, or other groups is one of the best ways to stay informed and shape your child's education.

Quick Reference: Parent Involvement Opportunities

Group/Committee	Purpose	Who Can Join	Meeting Frequency
School Site Council (SSC)	Develops and monitors the School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) and related budgets	Parents/guardians, teachers, staff, and students (secondary level)	4–6 times per year
English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)	Advises on programs and services for English Learner students; reviews language data	Parents/guardians of English Learners and other interested family members	4–6 times per year
Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) / Booster Groups	Plans events, fundraisers, and volunteer activities to support the school community	All parents/guardians and family members	Monthly or bi-monthly

District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)	Advises district officials on districtwide programs for English Learners	Representatives from school ELAC committees	Six times per year
LCAP Feedback Opportunities	Provides input on district goals, funding priorities, and annual updates to the LCAP	All families (through surveys, focus groups, or public hearings)	Annually (spring)
Title I Annual Meeting and Compact	Reviews Title I program goals, budgets, and parent-school compact responsibilities	Families at Title I schools	Annually (fall)

Quick Guide: Complaint Procedures

GUSD follows state and federal laws to ensure students and families have a clear process for raising concerns. Below is a summary of the main complaint procedures. Full policies and forms are available at your school office, the district office, and on the GUSD website. There are three categories for complaints: Uniform Complaint Procedures, Williams Complaints and Title IX Complaints. Each complaint procedure covers a different aspect and they are outlined below.

There is a point of contact for all of the complaint procedures in Gilroy Unified School District. Their contact information is provided at the end of this section.

Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP)

Use this process if you believe a program or right protected by law has been violated. This includes:

- State and federally funded programs (e.g., Title I, Title III, Child Nutrition)
- Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying based on protected characteristics (race, gender, disability, religion, etc.)
- Pupil fees, foster/homeless student services, or LCAP requirements
- Accommodations for students with disabilities (Section 504 or special education services)

Summary of Key Steps in the UCP Complaint Process:

- Complaints must be in writing and submitted to the district's UCP Compliance Officer
- **Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying complaints** must be filed **within six (6) months** of the incident (extendable up to 90 days for good cause)
- **All other UCP-related complaints** (e.g., program compliance, fees, LCAP, foster/homeless services): Must be filed **within one (1) year** of the violation.
- The district investigates and responds with a written report within **60 calendar days**
- The person filing the complaint can appeal the district's decision to the **California Department of Education (CDE)** within 30 calendar days of receiving the written investigation report from the district.

Williams Complaints

File a Williams complaint if there are problems with:

- **Textbooks or instructional materials** (missing or insufficient)
- **Facilities** (unsafe or unclean conditions)
- **Teacher assignments** (vacancies or misassignments)

Williams complaints can be filed **anonymously**. The school must respond within **30 working days**.

Title IX Complaints

Complaints about **sex discrimination or sexual harassment** are handled under Title IX and UCP rules.

- File with the Title IX Coordinator or with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
- Title IX investigations have specific timelines and protections for students

Complaints Against School Personnel

Concerns about district employees should be resolved promptly, beginning with direct communication between the complainant and the employee when possible. If unresolved, a complaint may be made orally or in writing to the employee's supervisor or principal. Complaints about a principal or central office administrator go to the Superintendent or designee; complaints about the Superintendent go to the Board. Written complaints must include the employee's name, a summary of the issue, and prior resolution attempts. The district aims to resolve complaints within 30 days. Appeals may be made to the Superintendent/designee, and in some cases, the Board. Complaints of child abuse or neglect are reported to appropriate agencies as required by law. (BP 1312.1)

Child Abuse Reporting

Parents/guardians have the right to file a complaint against a school district employee or any other person they suspect has abused a child at a school site. *Child abuse* includes: physical injury (other than accidental) inflicted by another person, sexual abuse, willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment, willfully causing physical pain or mental suffering or failing to protect a child from such harm, unlawful corporal punishment, neglect, or abuse in out-of-home care.

Child abuse does *not* include: mutual fights between minors, injuries caused by a police officer using reasonable and necessary force in specific situations (such as preventing injury, obtaining weapons, or apprehending an escapee), or injuries caused by reasonable and necessary force by school staff to stop a dangerous disturbance, defend themselves, or take possession of a weapon or dangerous object.

How to Report

A complaint may be made verbally or in writing to a local child protective agency, including police, sheriff, county probation, county welfare department, child protective services, or the school district. The agency will investigate, and if the complaint is substantiated, reports will be provided to the school board, appropriate law enforcement, and the district attorney. For more information, contact the Superintendent's Office at (669) 205-4000.

Need Help?

Start by contacting your **school principal** for support, but you may file a complaint directly at the district level at any time. Translation and interpretation services are available.

UCP Compliance Officer / Title IX Coordinator
Paul Winslow
Assistant Superintendent
Human Resources
Gilroy Unified School District
7810 Arroyo Circle
669-205-4012 | paul.winslow@gilroyunified.org

For full details and forms: Visit the GUSD website or ask for copies in your school office or the district office. Annual notices and postings are provided at every school site.

Notifications by Grade Level or Special Circumstances

In addition to districtwide notifications, some notices are required only at certain grade levels or during specific events. These notices ensure families are informed about programs, health requirements, and important safety matters.

Kindergarten and Primary Grade Notifications

Families of children in kindergarten and first grade receive several health-related notifications:

- **Oral Health Assessment (EC §49452.8):** By May 31st of the child's first year in public school (kindergarten or first grade), parents must submit proof of a dental check-up completed within the past year
    - The district provides information about this requirement at enrollment, along with resources for free or low-cost dental care
- **Lead Testing Information (Health & Safety Code §1597.16):** Families enrolling young children are notified about lead exposure risks and available lead testing resources, as recommended by state health agencies

Middle and High School Notifications

Families of older students receive additional notifications related to health education and graduation planning:

- **HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health Education (EC §51938):** GUSD provides comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention instruction to students in grades

- 5, 7, and 9. Instruction includes age-appropriate information about abstinence, contraception, STIs, consent, and healthy relationships. Parents are notified before instruction begins and may review materials or request to excuse their student from the unit of instruction. To opt-out or review materials, contact your school principal and teacher.
- **College and Career Planning (EC §51229):** High schools notify families about courses needed to meet California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) admission requirements (A–G requirements).
    - Schools also share how these courses align with high school graduation requirements and career technical education pathways.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use Prevention Education

Students in all grade levels receive instruction about the effects and risks of using tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, dangerous drugs, and other harmful substances. Lessons are age-appropriate, sequential, and designed to meet the developmental needs of students.

- **Grades 1–5:** Instruction is provided as part of health education or another appropriate subject area (*EC §51210).*

- **Grades 6–12:** Instruction is included in health education or another appropriate course of study (*EC §§51210, 51220).*

This education helps students make informed, healthy choices and understand the impact of substance use on their health and safety. *(EC §51260)*

Athletic Program Notifications

Student athletes and their families receive required safety notifications:

- **Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information (EC §33479.3):** Families must receive and sign an acknowledgment form about the warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest before a student participates in athletic activities
- **Concussion and Head Injury Protocols (EC §49475):** Parents are notified of concussion risks and the district's return-to-play protocol

- Students suspected of having a concussion must be removed from play immediately and cleared by a licensed health professional before returning

These notices prioritize student safety and ensure families understand health protocols for sports participation.

Special Event or Incident Notifications

Certain events trigger immediate notifications to families:

- **Pesticide Use Near Schools (EC §17612):** If a pesticide is used on or near school grounds, families receive advance notice describing the product and safety precautions.
- **Data Breaches (Civil Code §1798.29):** If personal student information is compromised (such as through a data breach), the district must notify affected families promptly and explain steps being taken to protect data.

These notifications help families stay informed about safety and privacy issues that may arise unexpectedly.

Quick Reference: Required Notifications by Grade Level or Special Circumstance

Grade Level / Circumstance	Required Notification	Legal Reference	Timing / Frequency
Kindergarten or 1st Grade	Oral Health Assessment requirement (dental check-up)	EC §49452.8	At enrollment; proof due by May 31st of first school year
Kindergarten or Primary Grades	Lead testing information and resources	H&S Code §1597.16	At enrollment

Middle & High School (Grades 7–12)	HIV/AIDS and sexual health education notice; right to review/opt-out	EC §51938	Prior to start of instruction each year course is offered
High School (Grades 9–12)	A–G course and graduation requirement information; college and career planning resources	EC §51229	Annually; typically at course planning or counseling meetings
Athletic Participation (All Grades)	Sudden Cardiac Arrest information and acknowledgment form	EC §33479.3	Before participation in athletic programs each school year
Athletic Participation (All Grades)	Concussion and head injury risks; return-to-play protocols	EC §49475	Prior to participation; acknowledgment required annually
Pesticide Use on or Near School Grounds	Advance notice of pesticide application	EC §17612	Annually and prior to each pesticide use
Data Breach / Personal Information Compromise	Notification of breach, type of information involved, and steps taken	Civil Code §1798.29	As soon as possible after breach is confirmed

Most grade-level and special circumstance notices are sent automatically when required. Check your child's enrollment packet and school communications for time-sensitive notifications each year.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

GUSD is committed to providing all students with a safe, supportive, and equitable learning environment. These rights and responsibilities are grounded in California law and GUSD Board Policies (BP) and Administrative Regulations (AR). They apply to all students in GUSD schools.

Your Rights as a Student

Right	What It Means for You	Key References
Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	You have the right to attend school without discrimination based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or other protected status.	BP 0410, BP/AR 5145.3; EC §§220, 56000
Safe and Clean Learning Environment	Schools must be clean, safe, and in good repair. You may file a Williams Complaint if facilities do not meet these standards. You may follow Uniform Complaint procedures for all other reasons.	BP 3514; Williams Complaint Procedures; EC §35186; Uniform Complaints EC §§234–234.5

Access to Counselors and Academic Planning	You may consult with counselors to plan your courses, graduation pathway, and post-secondary goals.	BP/AR 6164.2, BP 6146.1; EC §§49600–49602
Participate in Student Government	Eligible students may vote in school elections, run for office, and take part in student organizations. Student government is governed by local board policy and site rules, not education code. Free expression in campaign materials and speeches is protected by state law.	BP 5040, BP 6145.5; EC §§48907 (all students), 48950 (high school students, scope as defined in law)
Join School Activities	You may participate in extracurricular and athletic programs if you meet eligibility requirements.	BP 6145, BP/AR 6145.2; EC §220
Serve on Committees	Students may be invited to serve on advisory committees related to curriculum or school climate.	BP/AR 1220; BP 6141; BP 5137
Help Develop School Rules	You have the right to be informed of school rules and, when appropriate, participate in their development, as provided by state law.	BP/AR 5144, BP 5144.1; EC § 35291, 35291.5
Inspect and Correct Student Records	You may review your school records and request corrections or add written statements.	BP/AR 5125, AR 5125.3; EC §49060 et seq.

Freedom of Expression	You may express your opinions, distribute materials, and wear symbols, as long as it doesn't disrupt school.	BP/AR 5145.2; EC §§48907, 48950
Choose Your Dress	You may choose your clothing and grooming style, following dress code guidelines. State law also protects the wearing of cultural and religious attire, including headscarves, yarmulkes, and other religious or cultural headwear.	BP/AR 5132; EC §§35183 - 35183.5(b)
File Complaints and Receive Responses	You may file a complaint about school programs, discrimination, or other concerns and receive a timely response.	BP/AR 1312.3; BP/AR 5144; EC §§ 234–234.5
Mutual Respect	You have the right to be treated respectfully by staff and peers.	BP 5137
Protection from Unreasonable Search	You are protected from unreasonable searches of your person, property, or lockers.	BP/AR 5145.12; EC §§49050–49051
Clear School Jurisdiction Rules	You have the right to know when school rules apply off-campus or outside of regular hours.	BP/AR 5144; BP 5131; EC §48900(s)

Due Process	Before being suspended or expelled, you have the right to know the charges, present your side, and appeal decisions.	BP 5144.1; EC §§48911 (suspension), 48915–48918 (expulsion)

Your Responsibilities as a Student

Along with these rights, you have the responsibility to:

- Respect the rights and dignity of others, including classmates, staff, and community members
- Follow school rules and all applicable laws
- Attend school regularly and be on time
- Participate in learning to the best of your ability
- Use school resources responsibly and help maintain a safe, clean environment
- Avoid behavior that disrupts learning or endangers safety

Electronic Network Access – Student

Before using school computers, internet services, or other electronic network resources, students and parents/guardians must review and sign the **Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Agreement**. This agreement outlines expectations for responsible and safe use of technology in accordance with BP 6163.4.

Filing Complaints or Appeals

If you believe your rights have been violated, you may:

1. Talk to a teacher, counselor, or administrator
2. File a Uniform Complaint (UC) using the GUSD form available on the district website or at your school office *(more information can be found in the Uniform Complaint Procedure section of this handbook)*.
3. Appeal if you are not satisfied with the resolution

Full details are in the GUSD Uniform Complaint Procedures.

Student Activities and Program Overview

Across GUSD, there are a variety of student programs for students of all ages. Parents and guardians should review information provided directly from the school and also review the school website and notices throughout the year. Below is information on enrolling or eligibility for some of the programs in GUSD. This is not a comprehensive list:

High School Athletics (Sports Team Eligibility)

Eligibility After School Transfer

For high school students, including those transferring between Gilroy Unified School District high schools, eligibility for athletics is determined by California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) rules. Under CIF Section 220, Rule 223(A), a student transferring to a different Gilroy Unified high school is immediately eligible to participate in athletics if:

- The transfer occurs within the first 15 school days of the academic year, and
- The receiving school confirms that the student's selection process meets CIF requirements.

For full CIF rules and eligibility details, contact your school's athletic director.

Preparticipation Physical Exam for Athletics

High school students participating in interscholastic (between schools) athletic events will also be required to get a preparticipation physical exam (PPE) before they are allowed to play on a team. The coaches/school staff will inform parents of low-costs health screenings, if available. Complete physical exams by a personal physician are highly recommended. Forms can be found here: [Preparticipation Physical Evaluation - California Interscholastic Federation]

Power School After-School Program

Power School is Gilroy Unified School District's no-cost after-school program, offered every school day until 6:00 p.m. at all seven elementary schools, three middle schools, and Mt. Madonna High School. In partnership with the YMCA of Silicon Valley and Youth Alliance, the program provides healthy meals, homework assistance, academic support, recreation, and

enrichment activities that build students' confidence, independence, and social responsibility. Families can apply by downloading the application at www.gilroyunified.org/departments/educational-services/power-school or picking one up at any elementary or middle school office; the site coordinator will contact families when space is available.

Student Conduct and Discipline

GUSD is committed to maintaining safe, respectful, and supportive schools where all students can learn. To achieve this, the district has clear rules for behavior, explains what happens if rules are broken, and ensures students are treated fairly during the discipline process. This section outlines that information and specific laws in the California Education Code (EC) that protect students and guide district actions.

These rules apply:

- During school hours
- While traveling to and from school
- At school-sponsored events (on or off campus; weekday and weekend)
- In certain off-campus situations when student actions impact school safety or order (EC §48900(s))

Behavioral Expectations for All Students

Every student is expected to:

- **Show respect** for peers, staff, and property
- **Follow classroom, school, and district rules** at all times
- **Arrive on time and attend regularly** unless excused
- **Act in a way that supports learning** for self and others
- **Avoid dangerous or disruptive behavior**
- **Care for school resources** such as textbooks, devices, and facilities

Following these expectations helps create a safe and productive environment where all students can rely on their peers to create and maintain that environment..

District and School Site Discipline Rules

Each GUSD school has clear, written rules on discipline, developed with input from teachers, administrators, parents, other staff, and students. These rules are reviewed every year and shared with families via handbooks and other forms of communication so that everyone understands what is expected (EC §§35291, 48980).

- Families receive them at the start of the school year or upon enrollment
- Site rules must align with GUSD Board Policies and California law

The California Education Code identifies certain types of behavior that may result in school discipline. In GUSD, these behaviors generally fall into the following categories (EC § 48900 et seq.):

- **Physical harm:** Causing or threatening injury to others
- **Weapons:** Possessing firearms, knives, explosives, or similar dangerous objects
- **Drugs/alcohol/synthetic drugs:** Using, possessing, selling, or being under the influence (EC § 48900)
- **Theft or vandalism:** Stealing or damaging school or personal property
- **Bullying, harassment, hate violence:** Including actions based on race, gender, disability, or other protected status
- **Disruption or defiance:** For grades 9–12, serious or repeated disruption of school activities or willful defiance of school staff. For grades K–8, suspension for this reason is not permitted by law. In all grades, disruption or defiance is never grounds for expulsion (EC § 48900(k))
- **Cheating or academic dishonesty:** Including plagiarism

Parent/Guardian Financial Liability

Students are responsible for their conduct, and parents/guardians may be held financially liable for damage, loss, or injury caused by their child's actions. This includes restitution for any district property that is damaged, defaced, stolen, or not returned when requested, even if the loss was not intentional but resulted from inappropriate behavior. Liability applies to all district property loaned to students, such as textbooks, technology, classroom materials, PE equipment, elective course supplies, and calculators. Gilroy Unified School District may seek restitution through its Cost Recovery Program or other appropriate means. (EC §48904)

Possession and Use of Personal Electronic Devices

Gilroy Unified School District believes that a productive learning environment should be free of unnecessary distractions. The use of personal electronic devices, (including cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic signaling devices), is regulated while students are on campus, attending school-sponsored activities, under the supervision of district staff, or riding school buses. *(BP/AR 5131; EC §48901.5)*

Elementary Schools (TK–5)

- Use of cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices on campus is **prohibited**.
- Exceptions are permitted only if:
    - A licensed physician or surgeon determines the device is essential for the student's health and limits use to health-related purposes, **or**
    - The site administrator grants approval on a case-by-case basis.
- Unauthorized devices will be confiscated and returned at the discretion of the site administrator.
- Students who violate this policy are subject to discipline under district and site rules.
- Devices are brought to school **at the student's own risk**; the district is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Sample Discipline Process for Elementary Schools

Level	Consequence
1. 1st Offense	A warning from a staff member about PEDs policy and parent/guardian will be notified.
2. 2nd Offense	Item may be confiscated and student may pick-up the device from the office at the end of the school day. Parent/Guardian will be notified.

3. 3rd Offense	Parent/Guardian must pick up the item from the office at the end of the school day.
4. 4th Offense	Parent/Guardian must pick up the item from the office after school and parent/student sign a PED contract.

Secondary Schools (Grades 6–12)

- Students may possess devices but must keep them off and out of sight during class time (not on vibrate).
- Devices may be used before/after school and during breaks.
- Wearable technology in the form of smartwatches may be permitted during the school day, only if used for timekeeping, setting alarms, and other functions that support academic activities.
    - During lessons and assessments, students should ensure that their devices are on silent mode or, at the teacher's discretion, may be required to be stored away.
- Health-related exceptions follow the same process as in elementary grades.
- Unauthorized use or ringing of a device will result in confiscation and possible disciplinary action, which may include loss of the privilege to possess a device at school or school events.
- The district is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Prohibited Uses

Use of devices for unlawful or inappropriate purposes—including invasion of privacy, endangerment, sexual harassment, and cheating—is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action under district policy and the California Education Code *(BP/AR 5131; EC §48901.5)*.

- Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs) must be turned off and out of sight during class or when out of class with a hall pass.
- PEDs may be used during passing periods, brunch, and lunch.
- Portable speakers are not allowed at any time on campus and will be confiscated if played at any time during the day.

- Confiscated prohibited items may be returned to students or parents, turned over to law enforcement if illegal, or discarded if unclaimed after 20 school days.
- Wearable technology in the form of Smart Glasses is strictly prohibited.

Sample Discipline Process for Secondary Schools

Level	Consequence
1. 1st Offense	Pick up item after school from Discipline Office
2. 2nd Offense	Pick up item after school from Discipline Office; lunch detention assigned
3. 3rd Offense	Parent/guardian must pick up item from Assistant Principal's Office; after-school work detail assigned
4. 4th Offense	Parent/guardian must pick up item; parent/student must sign Personal Electronic Device Contract

Transportation Expectations

GUSD provides bus transportation for eligible students who live more than 1 mile radius (elementary), 2 mile radius (middle), or 3 mile radius (high school) from their assigned school. Transportation is not available for choice programs such as Dual Immersion. Eligible students receive bus route details through TransAct by App-Garden and must scan a district-issued QR code to ride. Parents can track buses using the Bus Quest App.

Riding the bus is a privilege, and safety is the top priority. Students must follow bus rules, including:

- Arrive at the stop 5 minutes early and wait until the driver opens the door to board
- Remain seated, wear seat belts if provided, and keep aisles clear
- Use respectful language and an inside voice; no loud music or disruptive behavior
- Keep body parts and belongings inside the bus
- No eating, hazardous items, animals (except service animals), or large items that block seats/aisles

Continuous misconduct may result in loss of riding privileges.

📞 **Transportation Department:** (669) 205-7900

Suspension and Expulsion Procedures

As a district, we work to address behavior concerns early and use suspension or expulsion only when necessary to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment.

A suspension is a temporary removal from school for up to five (5) consecutive school days. An expulsion is a removal from all GUSD schools for a period of time determined by the Board of Education

Both actions (suspension and expulsion) have legal requirements to ensure students are treated fairly under EC §§ 48900–48918.

What Happens Before a Suspension or Expulsion

Before a suspension or expulsion is considered, GUSD follows state law to ensure students and families are treated fairly and follows California Ed Code (EC §§ 48900–48918)):

- **Notice of charges:** We will tell your child exactly what they are accused of and the specific rule or Education Code section that applies
- **Opportunity to respond:** Your child will have the chance to explain their side of the story to the principal or designee
- **Presenting evidence:** Your child may share witnesses, evidence, or written statements for review
- **Fair decision-making:** An impartial panel of administrators will review the information and make the decision

- **Parent/guardian contact:** For most suspensions, we will contact parents/guardians the same day the decision is made

Expulsion-specific due process:

For students facing expulsion, GUSD follows state law (*EC § 48918)*:

- Written notice provided at least **ten (10) days before** the expulsion hearing.
- The right to be represented by a parent/guardian, advocate, or attorney.
- The right to question witnesses, witness statements, and/or presented evidence.
- The right to present witnesses or evidence.
- The Board of Education makes the final decision after reviewing all evidence.

Appeals: Families may appeal an expulsion decision to the Santa Clara County Board of Education within the timelines set by law (EC § 48919).

Alternative Education Options

If a student is expelled or placed outside the regular school, GUSD will offer, based on space availability and suitability to context, to one of the following:

- **Continuation high school** for credit recovery and smaller class sizes (EC §48432.3)
- **Community day school** structured academic and behavioral support (EC § 48660 et seq.
- **Independent study** for students able to work independently under supervision.
- **Other district-approved programs** that keep the student on track for graduation.

Dress Code and Uniform Policies

GUSD's dress and grooming standards are designed to support a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment. State law allows schools to set these standards as long as they are not discriminatory(EC §§ 35183–35183.5). Dress codes must be applied equally to all students and may not discriminate based on gender, cultural dress, or religious expression.

In GUSD:

- Clothing must cover the torso, midsection, and lower body adequately (Clothes shall be sufficient to conceal undergarments. See-through tops and bare abdomens are prohibited.)
- Gang-related attire or symbols are not allowed.
- Appropriate shoes must be worn at all times.
- Clothing, jewelry, or personal items with language or images promoting drugs, alcohol, violence, or hate speech is not allowed.
- Sun-protective clothing (e.g., hat) is allowed outdoors.
- Cultural or religious headwear (e.g., headscarves, yarmulkes, turbans) is allowed in accordance with EC § 35183.5(b).

If a school adopts a uniform policy, families will receive written notice and have the option to opt-out with a valid reason.

Substance Use and Synthetic Drug Warnings

GUSD is committed to keeping students safe and healthy. Using, possessing, or selling drugs, alcohol, or related products at school or school activities is dangerous and against the law.

California Education Code § 48900 prohibits the possession, use, or sale of:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vapes
- Controlled substances without a valid prescription
- Synthetic drugs, such as:
    - Synthetic cannabinoids (“spice,” “K2”)
    - Synthetic stimulants (“bath salts”)
    - Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids
    - Any substance meant to mimic an illegal drug

Fentanyl and other synthetic drugs can be deadly even in very small amounts. They may be disguised to look like prescription medications or other products, and are sometimes marketed to youth through **social media platforms** using slang, emojis, or coded messages.

Consequences for violations may include suspension, expulsion, referral to counseling, and/or involvement of law enforcement.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to talk with their children about these risks, monitor online activity, and seek immediate help if drug use or exposure is suspected.

Fentanyl & Counterfeit Drug Dangers (EC §48985.5)

Pursuant to California Education Code Section 48985.5, Gilroy Unified is required to annually inform parents and guardians about the dangers of synthetic drugs, including fentanyl.

The misuse and abuse of opioids and other drugs, including prescription medication, is already cause for concern; however, there has been a rise in the prevalence of fentanyl use across the United States. There is a risk that social media platforms are being used as a way to market and sell synthetic drugs such as fentanyl.

According to the California Department of Public Health ("CDPH"):

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. It is a major contributor to fatal and nonfatal overdoses in California and the United States.

There are two types of fentanyl: pharmaceutical fentanyl and illicitly manufactured fentanyl (illicit fentanyl). Both are synthetic opioids. Pharmaceutical fentanyl is prescribed by doctors to treat severe pain, such as while in the hospital for and after surgery or for advanced-stage cancer. Illicit fentanyl is distributed through illegal drug markets for its heroin-like effect.Illicit fentanyl can be added to other drugs to make them cheaper, more powerful, and more addictive. Illicit fentanyl has been found in many drugs, including heroin, methamphetamine, counterfeit pills, and cocaine. Fentanyl mixed with any drug increases the likelihood of a fatal overdose.

Fentanyl-laced drugs are extremely dangerous. It is nearly impossible to tell if drugs have been laced with fentanyl without the use of fentanyl test strips because fentanyl cannot be seen, smelled, or tasted. Test strips are inexpensive, typically give results within 5 minutes, and can be the difference between life or death. Even if the test is negative, caution should be taken as test strips might not detect other fentanyl-like drugs, like carfentanil.The DEA found that 2 out of every 5 counterfeit pills with fentanyl contains a potentially lethal dose of fentanyl. The only safe medications are ones prescribed by a trusted medical professional and dispensed by a licensed pharmacist.

In 2022, the CDPH released the following update on fentanyl:

Brightly-colored fentanyl (referred to as rainbow fentanyl) has been identified as a new trend according to the United States (U.S.) Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) [1]. Rainbow fentanyl can be found in many forms, including pills, powder, and blocks that can resemble sidewalk chalk or candy. Any pill (regardless of its color, shape, or size) that does not come from a health care provider or pharmacist can contain fentanyl and can be deadly.

If you think someone you know may be using fentanyl or another drug, please take note of the signs of an opioid overdose:

- Small, constricted "pinpoint pupils"
- Falling asleep or losing consciousness
- Slow, weak, or no breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Limp body
- Cold, clammy and/or discolored skin

Call 911 immediately if you believe someone is overdosing. If you are concerned someone in your life is at-risk of an overdose, carry the overdose reversal medication naloxone ("Narcan"). Narcan has no adverse effects and is available without a physician prescription at most pharmacies. See the District's policy on administering medication for information on the District's Naloxone policy (BP/AR 5141.21). If you find any pills, do not touch them. Call local law enforcement for removal or take appropriate precautions to dispose of them.

Additional Resources:

https://www.dea.gov/resources/facts-about-fentanyl

https://www.cdc.gov/stop-overdose/caring/fentanyl-facts.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/fentanyl/?s_cid=DOC_Fentanyl_PaidSearch_008

https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/DEA-OPCK_Parent%20flyer.pdf

https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2022/08/30/dea-warns-brightly-colored-fentanyl-used-target-young-americans

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/Pages/Fentanyl.aspx#

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/CDPH%20Document%20Library/FentanylTestStrips_FAQs.pdf

Where to Learn More

Complete Board Policies and Administrative Regulations are available at:
Gilroy Unified School District Board Policies

Key policies:

- **BP 5131** – Student Conduct
- **BP/AR 5144** – Discipline
- **BP/AR 5144.1** – Suspension/Expulsion Due Process
- **BP/AR 5132** – Dress and Grooming
- **BP/AR 3513.3** – Tobacco-Free Schools
- **BP/AR 5141.21** - Administering Medication and Monitoring Health Conditions
- **BP 5131.6** - Alcohol and other drugs

Partnering for Student Success

The Gilroy Unified School District is committed to working alongside families so every student can learn, grow, and succeed. This handbook gathers the most important information about your rights, responsibilities, and the many resources available to support your child's education, safety, and well-being.

Keep this handbook handy throughout the year. If policies or programs change, we will share updates through our website, newsletters, and other regular district communications.

Your involvement matters. By understanding these guidelines and taking part in school life, you help create a safe, inclusive, and challenging environment for all students.

If you have questions, need help understanding any section, or require translation, please reach out to your school office or the district office.

Thank you for being an active partner in your child's learning journey.

Quick Reference – Stay Connected

District Office
Gilroy Unified School District
7810 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020
📞 (408) 847-2700 | 🌐 www.gilroyunified.org

Key Contacts

- **Attendance questions:** School office attendance clerk
- **Special Education & 504 Plans:** Special Education Department – (408) 848-7100
- **Health services & immunizations:** School nurse or Health Office
- **Title IX & Non-Discrimination:** Title IX Coordinator – (669) 205-4012
- **Bullying or safety concerns:** School principal or counselor

Where to Find Updates

- District website "Policies & Notifications" page
- School newsletters and email updates
- Direct notices sent home with students

Need Translation or Assistance?
If you need this handbook or other school communications in another language, or need help understanding any policy, contact your school office.