Georgia Cyber Academy
1745 Phoenix Blvd., Ste. 100
Atlanta, GA 30349
404.334.4790
georgiacyber.org

Georgia Cyber Academy
Records Retention Policy

Approved: October 28, 2026

Reviewed: _____

Revised: _____

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Records Retention Policy is to establish standardized guidelines for the retention, storage, protection, and disposal of records maintained by Georgia Cyber Academy (GCA). This policy ensures compliance with applicable federal and state laws, supports operational effectiveness, and mitigates legal and security risks.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all GCA employees, contractors, and third-party service providers who create, receive, maintain, or dispose of GCA records. It applies to all formats, including electronic records, paper files, and system data.

3. Policy Statement

GCA retains records only for as long as necessary to comply with legal and regulatory requirements, support academic and operational functions, and protect student, staff, and organizational interests. All records will be securely disposed of once retention requirements are met.

4. FERPA Compliance (Student Data Privacy)

Georgia Cyber Academy complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). Education records are maintained to ensure confidentiality, integrity, and availability. Access is limited to school officials with legitimate educational interests. Parents and eligible students retain rights to inspect, review, and request amendment of education records in accordance with FERPA. Records may not be destroyed if there is an outstanding request for access. When education records are destroyed, GCA ensures destruction is secure and irreversible.

5. Records Retention Requirements

GCA follows Georgia Archives retention schedules, federal requirements, and operational needs. When multiple requirements apply, the longest retention period governs. Retention requirements are detailed in Appendix A.

6. Records Storage and Security

Records must be stored in approved and secure systems. Access is role-based and limited to authorized personnel. Sensitive information must be encrypted where appropriate, and physical records must be secured in controlled-access environments.

7. Data Disposal

At the end of the retention period, electronic records will be securely deleted or destroyed, and paper records will be shredded or otherwise securely disposed of in a manner that prevents reconstruction.

8. Litigation Hold

If Georgia Cyber Academy becomes aware of pending or reasonably anticipated litigation, audit, investigation, public records request, or other legal action, all routine destruction of potentially relevant records must immediately cease. The Superintendent, Legal Counsel, or designated authority may issue a Litigation Hold Notice directing employees to preserve specified records and data, regardless of standard retention schedules. Employees are required to comply with all litigation hold directives until notified in writing that the hold has been lifted.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

The Technology Department is responsible for secure storage, backups, and secure deletion practices. Department owners are responsible for proper classification and retention compliance. Leadership and compliance personnel oversee policy enforcement and legal alignment.

10. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

This policy aligns with Georgia Records Retention Schedules, applicable sections of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.), FERPA, IDEA, and applicable labor and financial regulations.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by changes in law, regulation, or operational needs.

12. Exceptions

Exceptions to this policy must be formally documented and approved by GCA leadership and, where appropriate, legal counsel.

Appendix A: Records Retention Schedule

Data Category	Record Type	Retention Period	Legal/Regulatory Basis	Notes
Student Records	Transcripts / Permanent Records	Permanent	Georgia retention schedules / FERPA	Must never be destroyed
Student Records	Enrollment Records	Permanent	State requirement	Part of cumulative student file
Student Records	Attendance Records	2 years	Georgia retention schedules	
Student Records	Special Education Records	Age 22 + guardian notification	IDEA / FERPA; Georgia retention schedules	
Student Records	Assessment/Test Data	1-3 years	Georgia retention schedules	May vary by assessment type
Staff Records	Personnel Files	Employment + 7 years	Labor laws; Georgia retention schedules	Includes evaluations
Staff Records	Payroll Records	3–4 years	FLSA / IRS; Georgia retention schedules	Wage and tax compliance
Staff Records	Background Checks	Employment + 7 years	Georgia retention schedules	Sensitive data handling required
Financial Records	Budgets / Audits	Generally permanent	State / audit standards; Georgia retention schedules	
Financial Records	Accounting Records	5 years	Georgia retention schedules	
Operational Records	Contracts	7-10 years	Georgia retention schedules	
Operational Records	Administrative Communications (Email)	Permanent	Georgia retention schedules	
Operational Records	General Communications (Email)	5 years	Georgia retention schedules	
Operational Records	Transitory Communications (Email)	Retain for useful life	Georgia retention schedules	
Operational Records	Incident Reports / Security Logs	1–5 years	Georgia retention schedules	Security-related