



Genesee Community Charter Schools

Conduct and Discipline Policy 2024-2025



**Genesee Community Charter School
Conduct and Discipline Policy
Approved by the Board of Trustees – August 21, 2024**

Contents

Introduction..... 4

Caring Community Plan..... 4

Responsive Classroom & Prevention..... 4

EL Education’s Design Principles..... 4

Restorative Practices 4

Individual Behavior Plans:..... 6

Misconduct and Interventions:..... 6

 Level 1 7

 Level 2 8

 Level 3 9

 Level 410

Student Disciplinary Measures11

Proposed Behavior Contract:11

Loss of School Privileges:11

Suspension from Transportation:.....11

Classroom Removal:.....11

Short-Term Suspension:12

Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion:.....12

Appeals from Long-Term Suspensions/Expulsions.....13

Gun-Free Schools Act:.....14

Discipline for Students with Disabilities:.....14

 Manifestation Determination and Cooperation with the School District of Residence:.....14

 Students with Section 504 Plans15

Alternative Instruction:.....15

Discrimination, Harassment and the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA):15

Engages in Bullying Behavior15

Engages in Cyberbullying Behavior16

Prevention and Intervention17

Training and Awareness.....17

Reports and Investigation of Allegations of Harassing Behavior18
Disciplinary Consequences/Remediation19
Confidentiality19
Prohibition of Retaliatory Behavior (Commonly Known as "Whistle-Blower" Protection).....20
Dissemination, Monitoring, Review and Reporting.....20
Visitors.....20

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to create and maintain a safe, supportive learning environment and strong school culture. **This policy governs the conduct of all students, employees, parents and visitors and applies to both on-school grounds conduct as well as conduct at school-sponsored events such as fieldwork.** The foundation of our Conduct and Discipline Policy is the *Caring Community Plan* which is derived from the *Responsive Classroom* approach and the *EL Design Principles* as described below. It is GCCS's expectation that conduct in our community be consistent with this policy. The policy also includes disciplinary measures that may apply to student and/or adult misconduct as necessary.

Caring Community Plan

The Caring Community Plan is the framework for GCCS school culture and climate. Families that choose to send their children to GCCS agree to model and encourage behaviors that align with this Plan. As part of student enrollment, and each year, families and students sign a Caring Community Commitment (Appendix A) in acknowledgement of their agreement with GCCS's approaches to fostering a safe supportive learning environment and disciplining students.

Responsive Classroom & Prevention

The *Responsive Classroom* approach focuses on developing a community that fosters positive decision-making and creative problem solving. We believe that students' growth toward kindness, respect and critical problem solving depends on becoming active members of a caring community. We further believe experience with decision-making and problem solving enables children to handle conflicts that arise, so we involve students as partners in resolving problems. All GCCS members continually work toward developing a sense of community where students feel safe and supported by consistently being encouraged to make judgments, express opinions, and work cooperatively toward solutions.

EL Education's Design Principles

EL Education (formerly Expeditionary Learning) has several design principles and character traits intended to foster a safe, supportive learning environment. Overall, when students become engaged in learning expeditions, students are stimulated, challenged, and less likely to engage in misconduct. EL Education's dual focus on character and academics helps us comprehensively address behavior problems. These design principles and character traits are found in the Student and Family Handbook, and all members of the GCCS community have a responsibility to uphold them so that GCCS feels safe and inclusive for everyone.

Restorative Practices

Most of the time, the first step in our discipline approach is utilizing *restorative practices*. Restorative practices build healthy communities by focusing on strengthening relationships between members of the community. In a school, restorative practices offer an

16933747.1 12/14/2023

opportunity for all people affected by an action to engage in conflict resolution to build and restore relationships. They create a positive school climate and strengthen the social and emotional skills of children. Restorative approaches address the underlying reasons for students' hurtful behavior and nurture their intrinsic desire to treat others with care and respect.

When students make decisions that harm their community, the focus is on supporting the offending student in correcting their inappropriate decisions and restoring the school culture to a positive learning environment. There are many practices in which teachers, administrators and students will work together to support offending students. Some of these restorative practices are:

1. **Crew** – Teachers will use *Crew* to bring people together to build relationships, talk about issues, facilitate SEL lessons, and resolve conflict. The purpose of this is to foster open communication, resolve conflict, strengthen relationships between participants, emphasize respect and understanding and empower all students. These meetings could include Restorative Circles or public “VOSP” (Voice, Ownership, Shoes, Plan) conflict resolution sessions.
2. **Rest and Relax (R & R)** – R & R is a dedicated space within the classroom where a student is able to go to calm down after a difficult situation. The purpose of R & R is to take no more than 15 minutes to calm down, refocus and prepare to rejoin the class. *R & R is non-punitive*. In addition, we have separate R & R rooms for students who need space out of the classroom.
3. **Buddy Classroom** – Buddy Classroom is a short break in a separate classroom with the purpose of calming down, refocusing and preparing to rejoin the class.
4. **Restorative Conversation** – Restorative conversation is the time outside of the academic day (lunch, recess, free choice, etc.) for a student to meet with the Crew teacher to reflect on the impact of student's behavior. This meeting takes place after the student has calmed down and returned to the academic setting. It is an opportunity to reflect on the root cause of the conflict, understand the impact it had on the community, and set a goal to avoid future conflicts as well as make plans to resolve any current problems brought about by the students' behavioral choices.
5. **Conflict Resolution**- When two students are in conflict, outside of the academic day (lunch, recess, free choice, etc.) teachers facilitate the VOSP conflict resolution protocol in effort to teach those in conflict to communicate effectively to resolve conflict, build empathy and understanding, clear up misunderstandings, and prevent further conflict.
6. **Mediation** – In response to support a small group of students in conflict, trained staff members or students will lead those involved through a mediation process that resolves

disputes between a small group of students. The purpose is to teach students

16933747.1 12/14/2023

how to communicate effectively to resolve conflict, build empathy and understanding, and ultimately clear up misunderstandings to prevent further conflict.

7. Restorative Circles – In response to an individual’s harmful behaviors, the harmful behaviors of a large group, or an event that caused community harm, trained staff members will facilitate a Restorative circle in order to support those in conflict to effectively communicate their perspective, build empathy and understanding, clear up misunderstandings, prevent further conflict, and ultimately create a Restorative contract that repairs any harm and prevents further conflict.

Individual Behavior Plans:

Occasionally, individual students benefit from plans specifically designed to address their unique needs. These plans are typically useful when a school’s standard, school-wide approaches to conduct and discipline have been ineffective in changing a student’s behavior. Individual plans may include restorative practices, such as those described above, and interventions, such as those described in the following section.

There are two types of individual behavior plans, Behavior Support Plans (“BSP”) and Behavior Intervention Plans (“BIP”). The primary difference between these two plans is that BSPs are developed/updated by GCCS staff and BIPs are developed/updated by the Committee on Special Education at the student’s school district. Regardless of which type of plan a student might have, GCCS references these plans when identifying effective behavior strategies, collects information related to the plan’s effectiveness, and works to update the plan whenever strategies are not effective.

These plans are not intended to replace interventions or disciplinary measures; they are intended to provide information as to what works well for a particular student. However, the plans must be consulted whenever misconduct occurs.

Misconduct and Interventions:

At GCCS, all misconduct must be addressed with an appropriate intervention(s). Interventions are intended to create a learning experience for a student to prevent future misconduct. Many interventions are rooted in the restorative practices described above; others are best practices related to classroom and school management. This section describes different types of misconduct and potential corresponding interventions. This policy cannot list every type of misconduct, so the purpose of this section is to provide guidelines for decision making related to misconduct. Ultimately, however, it is up to GCCS to determine how a particular act of misconduct should be addressed. GCCS’s decisions are based on several factors including developmental appropriateness, individual student needs, and prior disciplinary histories (if any).

16933747.1 12/14/2023

Information about students is confidential. Verbal and written information related to student behaviors, interventions and/or penalties cannot be disclosed to anyone except the student's parent/caregiver. Parents/caregivers with questions related to another student's behavior and/or GCCS's response should direct their inquiries to a School Director.

Level 1

Behaviors that interrupt learning or interfere with a positive school climate and/or teaching and learning include, but are not limited to:

EXAMPLES OF LEVEL 1 BEHAVIORS	POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engaging in behavior that is disruptive to common campus or off-campus/public spaces (ex. running and/or making excessive noise in the hall, stairwell, or on a field study) 2. Engaging in behavior that is disruptive to the process of classroom instruction, including but not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Excessive talking out of turn (in classroom or during transitions) b. Shouting/Outburst c. Frequent or ongoing off-task conversations during collaborative work d. Out of seat/wandering in the classroom or meeting area e. Note-passing during instruction f. Throwing objects (non-aggressive - without intention to cause physical harm) g. Disregarding teacher instructions h. Other minor physical and verbal actions that affect the health and safety of the student and/or others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Private student-teacher consultation ● Review classroom expectations and/or EL character traits with the individual student and/or through a "whole class reminder" ● Non-verbal redirection/cues ● Interactive modeling ● Role-playing ● Verbal redirection ● Invite to <i>R&R space</i> in the classroom ● Change student seat/ location within classroom ● Restorative intervention/circle with impacted parties ● Social problem-solving conference ● Reflection time in a Buddy Classroom ● Open communication with parents regarding new or patterned behaviors

3. Technology misuse related to playing games, downloading non-school related applications, searching non-school related content	
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Level 2

Behaviors that knowingly violate school rules and/or are disrespectful include but are not limited to:

EXAMPLES OF LEVEL 2 BEHAVIORS	POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unauthorized use or possession of cellular telephones or other information technology devices in school 2. Leaving the classroom without permission (also referred to as eloping) 3. Initiating or participating in any unacceptable minor physical actions without intent to harm (ex. play fighting, wrestling/rough-housing, forceful tag) 4. Exclusionary behavior, including using social media 5. Cursing at others 6. Use of the GCCS network and/or devices for the purposes of distributing or downloading non educational material that may be harmful to self or peers 7. Persistent arguing with the teacher or peers 8. Refusal to willingly participate appropriately in R&R space and/or Recovery Room 9. Repeated/patterned disruptive behaviors 10. Making verbal threats of violence toward others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verbal redirection/ warning ● Non-verbal redirection/warning ● Change student seat/ location within classroom ● Restorative conversation ● Recovery within the classroom in the <i>R&R space</i> ● Time-out in a Buddy Classroom ● Reflection during lunch, recess, free choice etc. ● Student/teacher/parent/caregiver conference (phone or in-person) ● Loss of classroom privilege (such as loss of technology device for a short period of time) ● Conflict Resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ VOSP Protocol ○ Mediation ○ Restorative Circle

Level 3

Behaviors that create a risk of physical harm to oneself or others, causes significant emotional distress to another, or is a serious violation of school policy include but are not limited to:

EXAMPLES OF LEVEL 3 BEHAVIORS	POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exhibiting or publishing profane, obscene, indecent, libelous, oppressive, discriminatory or offensive materials, or using such language related to personal traits (such as actual or perceived race, sex, gender, socioeconomic, weight, disability dress/hair, intelligence, religion, etc.) 2. Possession (physical control over, such as contained in clothing, cubbies, or bags) of tobacco or other nicotine products, alcohol, marijuana, illegal substances/drugs, matches, lighters, or other smoking-related devices or products 3. Possession (physical control over, such as contained in clothing, cubbies, or bags) of a weapon such as a knife or other object that has the capacity to inflict harm 4. Minor harmful physical or emotional behavior on fieldwork with intent to put themselves, others, or property at risk 5. Physical contact between two people without regard to the other's safety 6. Graffiti (willful defacing of the property of others) 7. Forgery – false and fraudulent making or altering of a document or the use of such a document 8. Plagiarizing, cheating and/or copying the work of another student or other source 9. Use of GCCS's Wi-Fi network or other school-related digital platforms (i.e., Google Classroom, Zoom, Seesaw, etc.) for a seriously disruptive purpose 10. Leaving the school without permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use appropriate behavior intervention(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create/Consult student BIP or BSP ○ Consult student IEP, if applicable ● Change student seat/ location within classroom ● Restorative Conversation ● Apology of action to negatively impacted parties ● Recovery within the classroom ● Time-out in a Buddy Classroom ● Loss of privilege related to the behavior/action ● Reflection during lunch, recess, free choice etc. ● Conflict Resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ VOSP Protocol (teacher led) ○ Mediation (trained facilitator led) ○ Restorative Circle (trained facilitator led) ● Alternative learning space up to one full day within the classroom ● Alternative learning space up to one to full day in a separate classroom ● Complete necessary documentation for possible out-of school suspension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Required re-engagement process upon a student's return to school with impacted parties. ● DASA and/or Title IX processes if applicable ● Student/teacher/caregiver conference

16933747.1 12/14/2023

<p>11. Harassment, discrimination and/or bullying 11. Repeated/patterned insubordinate behavior</p>	
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Level 4

Behaviors that cause, are intended to cause, or foreseeably would cause physical injury to oneself or others include, but are not limited to:

<p>EXAMPLES OF LEVEL 4 BEHAVIORS</p>	<p>POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS</p>
<p>1. Use of cellular telephones or other information technology devices to incite violence or interrupt learning environments, including use of devices to record others without permission or unauthorized distribution of recordings</p> <p>2. Possession (physical control over, such as contained in clothing, cubbies, or bags) of a weapon such as a knife, gun, or other object with intent to cause harm</p> <p>3. False activation of a fire alarm</p> <p>4. Making a bomb threat</p> <p>5. Physical assault or attempted assault</p> <p>6. Vandalism (willful or malicious destruction or defacing of the property of others) or destruction/serious damage to property</p> <p>7. Physical fighting</p> <p>8. Theft (unauthorized control over the physical property of another) or possession (physical control over, such as contained in clothing, cubbies or bags) of stolen property</p> <p>9. Repeated/patterned unsafe behavior</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Secure the safety of student(s) ● Separate the student from the Crew (Buddy Crew, Main Office etc.) ● Initial Restorative Conversation and processes with a plan to repair harm. ● Complete necessary documentation to recommend administrative action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When the suspension is assigned, the student’s teacher co-creates a plan with the student, with support from SEL team, for preventing future incidents, restoring relationships, and addressing student needs ○ Any out-of-school suspension will be followed with a restorative re-engagement conference upon re entering the community.

Student Disciplinary Measures

There are times when interventions are unsuccessful and/or when behavior warrants discipline in addition to interventions. This section describes the different types of discipline that may be imposed.

Proposed Behavior Contract:

School staff may develop and propose written agreements between the school and students subject to punishment under this policy. The purpose of a behavior contract is to identify target behaviors, define expectations, and describe consequences that may be imposed if the student violates the contract. While the decision to enter into a behavior contract is voluntary, if the parent/caregiver declines, other disciplinary action may be imposed.

Loss of School Privileges:

After verbal notice to the student and parent/caregiver, a student may be excluded from participation in extracurricular activities such as field studies if the behavior is directly related to the activity. Students may also experience a temporary loss of classroom materials such as a device if they are being misused. The student and parent shall be given an opportunity to meet informally with the School Director or staff member involved, however the meeting may take place after the loss of privileges occurs. School curriculum and programming will be considered and adjusted with any consequences regarding loss of school privileges.

Suspension from Transportation:

Transportation is not provided by GCCS. Students who use school district transportation may be subject to discipline by the school district and/or GCCS. **GCCS has no decision-making authority for school district-imposed discipline relative to transportation**, and parents/caregivers seeking information related to such disciplinary action should contact the transportation department of their school district.

If a student is suspended from transportation, the parent/caregiver is responsible for providing alternative transportation during the period of suspension. Absences of students who do not attend school because they are suspended from transportation are considered unexcused.

Classroom Removal:

Students may be removed from class as a result of their misconduct. Removals are typically short-term (e.g., for a cooling-off period). Parents/caregivers will not be notified of one removal but will be notified if there is a pattern of removal (e.g., three removals within a short period of time, such as one instructional day or within one week for similar behaviors). The student and parent shall be given an opportunity to meet informally with the School Director or staff member involved, however the removal will not be delayed pending such meeting.

16933747.1 12/14/2023

Short-Term Suspension:

A short-term suspension is the removal of a student from school for a period of up to ten school days. The School Director shall determine the period of suspension on a case-by-case basis. Before imposing a short-term suspension, the School Director shall explain the alleged misconduct to the student and, if the student denies or disagrees with the information, the School Director shall provide an explanation of the evidence in support of the finding that the misconduct occurred. The student will also be provided with the opportunity to present their version of events.

Before imposing a short-term suspension the School Director shall notify the parent/caregiver that the student may be suspended from school. Written notice shall be provided by personal delivery or express mail delivery within 24 hours of the decision to impose the suspension. The notice will be sent to the address on file in the dominant language or mode of communication of the parent/caregiver. Parents will be given the option to receive communications via email at the beginning of each year, in which case notice will be sent via email. Wherever possible, notice shall also be provided via telephone call.

If the student's presence on school grounds pending notice poses a danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the educational process, the short-term suspension may be imposed prior to the informal conference.

Written and telephone notice shall: (1) include a description of the incident(s) for which the suspension is proposed; and (2) inform the parent/caregiver of their right to request an informal conference with the School Director. The School Director shall schedule an informal conference as soon as possible. The informal conference shall be provided in the dominant language or mode of communication of the parent/caregiver.

If a parent/caregiver disagrees with the decision of the School Director, they may file a written appeal to the Board of Trustees via the School Director within five business days of the date of the School Director's decision. The appeal to the Board will be handled by the Board's designee, the Executive Director, or his/her designee.

Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion:

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from school for a period of more than ten days; and an expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from GCCS. When the School Director believes a long-term suspension or expulsion may be warranted, the School Director shall impose a suspension of up to ten days and refer the student to the Executive Director for further disciplinary action. The Executive Director or designee shall serve as the hearing officer and a formal long-term suspension/expulsion hearing shall be held. Prior to imposing a long-term suspension, the following steps shall be taken:

16933747.1 12/14/2023

1. If the student poses a danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the educational process, the student shall be immediately removed from class and/or school.
2. Once the School Director has determined s/he is going to refer the student for a long term suspension/expulsion, the School Director shall inform the student that s/he is being suspended and is being referred to the Executive Director for consideration for a long-term suspension/expulsion, and explain the reasons for that referral.
3. The parent/caregiver shall be notified of the referral in writing by personal delivery or express mail delivery within 24 hours of the decision to refer the student for a long-term suspension/expulsion. Where possible, the notice shall also be provided by telephone call. The notice shall be in the dominant language/mode of communication of the parent/caregiver.
4. The notice shall:
 - a. include a description of the incident or incidents with resulted in the suspension;
 - b. indicate that a formal disciplinary hearing will be held on the matter;
 - c. include the date, time, and location of the hearing;
 - d. notify the parent/caregiver of the student's right to representation by counsel or a non-attorney advocate of the parent's choosing, the right to present evidence, and the right to question witnesses;
 - e. the right to request a record of the hearing (via audiotape); and
 - f. state that a written decision will be provided.
5. The hearing officer (the Executive Director or designee) shall oversee the hearing and the hearing shall be recorded. The hearing officer will listen to both sides and ask clarifying questions as needed. The hearing officer shall issue a written decision that includes the findings of fact related to the charges and the disciplinary decision reached. The written decision shall be sent to the parent/caregiver within seven school days after the hearing.
6. If the hearing officer is a designee, and the student is found to have engaged in misconduct, the hearing officer may make a recommendation to the Executive Director related to the penalty. The Executive Director shall determine the appropriate penalty and notify the parent/caregiver of such in writing within seven school days of the determination. The Executive Director shall consider the student's prior disciplinary history when determining the penalty.

Appeals from Long-Term Suspensions/Expulsions

If a parent/caregiver disagrees with a long-term suspension/expulsion, they may appeal the decision in writing to the Board of Trustees. The appeal must be received by the Board within

three weeks of the date on the written decision. On appeal, the Board or a group of three board members appointed by the Board Chairperson will review the “record.” The record includes any written statements relied on as part of the decision to suspend the student, the suspension letters to the parent/caregiver, and any written summary of the reasons for the

16933747.1 12/14/2023

appeal from the parent/caregiver. For long-term suspensions/expulsions, the record also includes audio-recording of the hearing, and any tangible evidence (e.g., hearing exhibits) presented at the hearing. The Board may elect to ask questions of the parent/caregiver and/or Executive Director, but the parent/caregiver does not have a right to present any oral argument or attend the Board’s deliberations of the matter.

The Board will consider the appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting and issue a written decision within seven school days of the meeting. The Board’s decision may be further appealed to the School’s authorizer pursuant to the Complaint Policy, which can be found on the school’s website.

Gun-Free Schools Act:

Federal and State law requires the suspension from school for at least one calendar year of a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school or to have possessed a firearm at school. The Executive Director may modify this requirement on a case-by-case basis, including imposing an expulsion. Any modification must be in writing in accordance with the Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994.

Discipline for Students with Disabilities:

In addition to the disciplinary procedures applicable to all students, GCCS follows all federal laws applicable to students with disabilities.¹ A student not specifically identified as having a disability but whose school district of residence or GCCS, prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action, has a basis of knowledge² that a disability exists may request to be disciplined in accordance with these provisions.

GCCS shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with disabilities including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.

For penalties that do not constitute a disciplinary change in placement (10 days or less), students with disabilities shall be subject to the same disciplinary policy as students without disabilities. Students will receive the same legally required alternative instruction as other students.

Manifestation Determination and Cooperation with the School District of Residence:

Whenever a suspension of a student with an IEP or a student suspected of having a education-related disability exceeds ten days in a school year (either through a series of short

term suspensions for a pattern of behavior or a referral for a long-term suspension that will exceed ten days), GCCS shall notify the student's district of residence of the need for a manifestation determination review (MDR). In the event a MDR determines that the conduct

¹See 34 C.F.R. 300.530 – 300.536.

²See 34 C.F.R. 300.534.

16933747.1 12/14/2023

of a student with a disability is attributable to that disability, the student shall immediately be permitted to return to the school, in lieu of beginning or completing the period of suspension. If a student's behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, the student shall be disciplined in the same manner as the school's general education students.

Students with Section 504 Plans

Students with 504 plans will be subject to the same disciplinary processes as students with IEPs, except that in the case of a change in placement totaling more than 10 days, the student shall not be referred to the CSE. Instead, the school will conduct its own meeting to determine whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability.

Alternative Instruction:

Students who are removed from school are entitled to receive alternative instruction. Alternative instruction should begin on the first day of the student's suspension or as soon as practicable. "Alternative instruction" means instruction which is substantially equivalent to the school program and GCCS will develop an alternative instruction plan designed to meet this requirement, recognizing it may be different for each student.

For students with IEPs who are removed for more than 10 days which is determined to be a disciplinary change in placement will receive services to the extent determined necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and achieve the student's IEP goals.

Discrimination, Harassment and the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA):

GCCS is committed to providing a safe and productive learning environment within its schools that promotes respect, dignity and equality. GCCS recognizes that acts of discrimination, such as harassment, hazing and bullying, are detrimental to student learning and achievement. These behaviors interfere with the mission of GCCS to educate its students, and they disrupt the operation of the school. Such behavior affects not only the students who are its targets but also those individuals who participate and witness such acts. To this end, GCCS strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination, such as harassment, hazing, and bullying on school property, on school buses, and at school sponsored events and/or activities, whether occurring on or off campus, including any electronic format.

Engages in Bullying Behavior

For purposes of this policy, the term "bullying" among children is defined, in general, as:

"a variety of negative acts carried out repeatedly over time." It is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time. The person who is bullying has the intent to cause harm. Bullying conduct includes, but is not limited to, harassment that is related to race, color, weight, ethnicity, national origin, religion, religious practices, sexual orientation, gender or sex, age, disability, and physical appearance.

16933747.1 12/14/2023

Bullying can take three forms:

- a) Physical (including, but not limited to, hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, taking personal belongings);
- b) Verbal (including, but not limited to, taunting, malicious teasing, name calling, making threats); and
- c) Psychological (including, but not limited to, non-verbal actions, i.e. giving dirty looks or aggressive stares; spreading rumors; manipulating social relationships; or engaging in social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation.

It is important to note that a single negative act as enumerated above may also constitute "bullying" (if not more serious misconduct) based upon the particular circumstances such as the seriousness of the act and/or the intent of the actor. GCCS will use discretion in reviewing each incident independently in the context of the situation. Bullying/ harassment may constitute a violation of an individual's civil rights.

Engages in Cyberbullying Behavior

As with other forms of bullying, cyberbullying is an attempt to display power and control over someone perceived as weaker. Cyberbullying involving students may occur both on campus and off school grounds and may involve student use of the school's internet system or student use of personal digital devices while at school, such as cell phones, digital cameras, and personal computers to engage in bullying.

Cyberbullying is unacceptable, and offenders shall be subject to appropriate staff intervention which may result in administrative discipline. Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student or staff member by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory e-mail messages, instant messages, text or pager messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including chat rooms or blogs).

Cyberbullying has the effect of:

- a) Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical, emotional or mental harm; b)
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; and

c) Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities.

Also, cyberbullying that occurs off-campus, and causes or threatens to cause a material or substantial disruption in the school, could allow school officials to apply the "Tinker standard" where a student's off campus "speech" may be subject to formal discipline by school officials when it is determined that the off campus speech caused a substantial disruption or

16933747.1 12/14/2023

threat thereof within the school setting.³ Such conduct could also be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with GCCS's Conduct and Discipline Policy and possible referral to local law enforcement authorities. It is important to note that a single negative act as enumerated above may also constitute "cyberbullying" (if not more serious misconduct) based upon the particular circumstances, such as the seriousness of the act and/or the intent of the actor. GCCS will use discretion in reviewing each incident independently viewed in the context of the situation.

Prevention and Intervention

GCCS will emphasize among staff, parents and students, that cooperation and respect for others is a key part of the Caring Community Plan. Curriculum and programs designed to help students build more supportive relationships will be emphasized and integrated in classroom instruction and in extracurricular activities. Staff members and students will be trained to respond to the warning signs of harassment and to recognize their responsibility to become actively involved in the prevention of harassment before overt acts occur. Personnel at all levels are responsible for taking corrective action to prevent harassing behavior of which they have been made aware at all property and expedition sites or activities and/or reporting such behavior to their immediate supervisor. Further, staff training shall be provided to raise awareness of the problem of harassment and to facilitate staff identification of and response to such harassing behavior among students.

Prevention and intervention techniques to prevent harassing behavior and to support and protect victims shall include building-level and classroom-level strategies and activities as determined by administration. Intervention by adults and bystanders is an important step in preventing escalation and resolving issues at the earliest stages. Intervention will emphasize education and skill building. Successful intervention includes remediation. Remedial responses to harassment include measures designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior and protect the target. Remediation may apply to an individual or be implemented through environmental approaches which address the school as a whole. Staff, students and parents work in collaboration to define and implement any needed accommodations when a child does not feel safe at school.

Training and Awareness

GCCS ensures that training opportunities are provided to all staff. The Executive Director will appoint at least one Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC) who shall be thoroughly trained in human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex in order to implement this policy. Training for all staff will be provided each school year in conjunction with existing professional development training to raise staff awareness and sensitivity of bullying, discrimination, and/or harassment directed at students that are committed by students or

³Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Sch. Dist. 393 U.S. 503 (1969).

17

16933747.1 12/14/2023

school employees on school property, at a school function, or off school property when the actions create or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment or where it is foreseeable that the conduct might reach school property.

Training will include ways to promote a supportive school environment that is free from bullying, discrimination, and/or harassment. Training will:

- a) Raise awareness and sensitivity to potential acts of harassment aimed at students.
- b) Address social patterns of harassment and the effects on students.
- c) Inform employees on the identification and mitigation of such acts.
- d) Provide strategies for effectively addressing problems of exclusion, bias, and aggression.
- e) Include safe and supportive school climate concepts in curriculum and classroom management.
- f) Ensure school employees are knowledgeable in prevention methods and can respond to incidents of harassment.
- g) Ensure the effective implementation of school policy on conduct and discipline.

Instruction in grades Kindergarten through 6 will include a component on civility, citizenship, and character education. Such components will instruct students on the principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others, observance of laws and rules, courtesy, dignity, and other traits which will enhance the quality of their experiences in, and contributions to, the community. For the purposes of this policy, "tolerance," "respect for others," and "dignity" will include awareness and sensitivity to bullying, discrimination and/or harassment, and civility in the relations of people of different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, genders, and sexes. Such components must also include instruction on the safe and responsible use of the Internet and electronic communications. New teachers shall be provided a complete copy of the current Conduct and Discipline Policy upon their employment. An age-appropriate

summary called “The Caring Community Commitment Plan” shall be distributed to all students at school as part of Community Circle or another school-wide assembly at the beginning of each school year.

Reports and Investigation of Allegations of Harassing Behavior

Any student who believes that he/she is being subjected to harassing behavior, as well as any other person who has knowledge of or witnesses any possible occurrence of harassment, shall report the behavior to the School Director or DAC who shall investigate the complaint and take appropriate action to include, as necessary, referral to the next level of supervisory authority.

Allegations of harassment shall be promptly investigated and will be treated as

16933747.1 12/14/2023

confidential and private to the extent possible within legal constraints. The Executive Director shall notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when it is believed that any harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct. Students who have been harassed, parents whose children have been harassed, or other students and staff who observe harassing behavior are encouraged and expected to make a verbal and/or written complaint in accordance to provided guidelines. Complaints will be documented, tracked, and handled in accordance with DASA requirements. If a staff member is unsure of the reporting procedure he/she is expected to inquire about the process by speaking with his/her supervisor or the DAC. Incidents will be included in the Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting (VADIR) system when applicable by the building DAC.

All school personnel are required to report any incidents of student-to-student and staff-to-student harassment observed to their building principal, immediate supervisor or the DAC within one school day after witnessing or receiving a report of such incident. The employee must then file a written report within two (2) school days after making the oral report. All employees must provide details of the incident, including where it occurred and the specific nature of the incident including, but not limited to, the types of bias involved (actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, sex, or other). Where multiple types of bias are involved, they will all be reported, whether the incident resulted from student and/or employee conduct and involved physical contact and/or verbal threats, intimidation or abuse. After the DAC investigates the complaint, the results of the investigation shall be reported back to both the target and the accused. If either party disagrees with the results of the investigation, they can appeal the findings. Students, parents and staff have the option to report an incident using the Dignity Act Reporting Form found on GCCS’s website. This form may be used to file complaints anonymously, however GCCS seeks to work in partnership with parents, staff, and students to resolve problems. Anonymous reporting can limit the ability of the DAC to resolve complaints.

Disciplinary Consequences/Remediation

Responses to student violations of this policy shall be age-appropriate and include both appropriate restorative responses and consequences for a student or staff member who

commits one or more acts of harassment. Consequences will be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of behaviors, and must be consistent with the Conduct and Discipline Policy.

Confidentiality

GCCS will respect the privacy of all parties and witnesses to bullying. To the extent possible, GCCS does not release the details of a complaint or the identity of the complainant or the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed to any third parties who do not need to know such information. However, because an individual's desire for confidentiality must be balanced with GCCS's legal obligation to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a

16933747.1 12/14/2023

prompt and thorough investigation and/or take necessary action to resolve the complaint, GCCS retains the right to disclose the identity of parties and witnesses to complaints in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know. The staff member responsible for investigating complaints (DAC) discusses confidentiality standards and concerns with complainants.

Prohibition of Retaliatory Behavior (Commonly Known as "Whistle-Blower" Protection)

GCCS prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who participate in the investigation of allegations of harassment. Follow-up inquiries and/or appropriate monitoring of the alleged perpetrator and victim shall be made to ensure that harassing behavior has not resumed and that all those involved in the investigation have not suffered retaliation.

Dissemination, Monitoring, Review and Reporting

This policy or a plain language summary shall be published in student registration materials, student, parent and employee handbooks, and posted on GCCS website. A form to report harassment, bullying, cyber bullying, or intimidation, will be posted on GCCS's website. GCCS will ensure that the process of reporting harassment is clearly explained to all staff, students, and parents. The policy will be periodically reviewed to assess its effectiveness and any recommended changes will be brought to the Board for its consideration.

Visitors

GCCS takes great pride in its relationships with families, partners and community members and the safety and well-being of GCCS students and staff is GCCS's first priority. Therefore, visitors, including but not limited to parents/caregivers, students' siblings, services providers, vendors, and consultants, are expected to follow this policy. Adult visitors are expected to model exemplary behavior while in the presence of GCCS students and staff.

Visitors who fail to follow this Conduct and Discipline Policy may be excluded from school property, activities, and events by the Executive Director. The Executive Director will take

reasonable efforts to notify the visitor in writing of the exclusion; however, visitors may be excluded upon verbal notice by the Executive Director or designee. Visitors who are excluded are not entitled to due process and GCCS reserves the right to pursue any and all legal remedies, including filing criminal charges, for excluded visitors who trespass, threaten the safety or well-being of others, or otherwise continue to violate this policy.