

# Welcome to Gahanna Middle School South

349 Shady Spring Drive  
Gahanna, OH 43230

(Office) 614.337.3730  
(Fax) 614.337.3734

**Ms. Robin Murdock**  
Principal  
[murdockr@gjps.org](mailto:murdockr@gjps.org)

**Mr. Todd Keenan**  
Assistant Principal  
[keenant@gjps.org](mailto:keenant@gjps.org)

**Mr. Deron Green**  
Guidance Counselor  
[greend@gjps.org](mailto:greend@gjps.org)

## Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools - Board of Education

**Mr. Matt Campbell**  
[campbellmp@gjps.org](mailto:campbellmp@gjps.org)

**Ms. Beryl Piccolantonio**  
[piccolantonio@gjps.org](mailto:piccolantonio@gjps.org)

**Ms. Daphne Moehring**  
[moehringd@gjps.org](mailto:moehringd@gjps.org)

**Mr. Jason Phillips**  
[phillipsj@gjps.org](mailto:phillipsj@gjps.org)

**Follow GMSS on Twitter:** @GahannaSouth

**Instagram:** Gahanna\_South

**Visit the School Website:** [http://www.gahannaschools.org/schools/middle\\_school\\_south/schoolmiddleschoolsouth.aspx](http://www.gahannaschools.org/schools/middle_school_south/schoolmiddleschoolsouth.aspx)

**Visit the District Website:** <http://www.gahannaschools.org/>

### Purpose

This handbook with information about the school is designed to acquaint you with many of the opportunities and responsibilities that are yours as a student at Gahanna Middle School South. The staff is here to help you get the best education possible. The building reflects the support of the community to help achieve that goal. We trust you will share with the community its pride in this fine facility and endeavor to keep it a building that we can all be proud of. We trust that your years in the middle school will be rewarding and satisfying.

### Philosophy

The Gahanna Middle School South philosophy addresses itself to the growth of the total student. The primary focus is the development of academic skills. These skills can best be achieved with self-discipline (student awareness of appropriate behavior), healthy development (emotional and physical growth), and concern for the students' ability to become contributing members of the society in which they live and work, with special emphasis on career opportunities and character education. The staff of Gahanna Middle School South, through individual instruction and team approach efforts, desires to see each student develop at a rate commensurate with his/her abilities and awareness. The curriculum integrates academic and cultural courses so that the school environment closely relates to life and the world outside of the school building. When each student leaves the middle school, it is the goal of the staff that they will be equipped with the critical thinking skills and self confidence necessary to meet the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities they will encounter as they become young adults.

### Mission Statement

***South Synergy...Challenge, Inspire, Prepare...Together*** Our mission at Gahanna Middle School South is to cultivate an environment that provides opportunities which challenge and inspire students to become knowledgeable, responsible, respectful, and caring citizens who value life-long learning. To accomplish this, we believe that all students, parents, staff, and community members must become actively involved in the learning process. SOUTH SYNERGY!

### Mission Statement Continued

**GMSS will actively engage in the following processes:**

- meeting individual academic needs
- adopting global awareness/celebrating diversity
- broadening and developing organizational and study skills
- strengthening the ability to access, evaluate, and synthesize information
- exercising problem solving and higher level thinking skills
- enhancing technological facilities and skills
- practicing conflict management and peer mediation
- exploring career options
- encouraging community interaction
- promoting good citizenship
- providing extra-curricular activities
- updating curricula/activities
- advancing professional development of staff members

**GAHANNA-JEFFERSON SCHOOL BOARD APPROVED CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT**

Since an orderly atmosphere is essential if learning is to take place, rules and guidelines assist in developing student responsibility and self-discipline as well as aide in promoting the common good and positive climate of the entire school. The Gahanna-Jefferson Middle Schools must provide each student with the maximum opportunity to acquire an education. No student has the right to interfere with this opportunity by his/her actions, poor manners, or lack of consideration. All rules and guidelines are instituted and enforced with this thought in mind. Student and/or parent conferences, detentions, Saturday sessions, in-school restrictions, out-of-school suspensions, or expulsion will be used whenever it is deemed necessary.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified, and respectful manner at all times. The following code of student conduct specifies certain types of conduct for which a student may be suspended, expelled, or removed. Such conduct may occur either:

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

Students are responsible for all items they bring on school grounds, e.g. the contents of cars whether known or unknown. Students are also responsible for all the contents of book bags and items in possession, whether known or unknown.

School officials have the right to search students for inappropriate items and if they are in the vicinity of stolen property. This must be done to locate item(s) and to dispel fake claims issued against a student.

A student who violates any of these rules may be suspended for up to ten (10) days, and may be expelled for up to one (1) year. If fewer than ten (10) days remain in the school year in which the violation takes place, any remaining part or all of the suspension or expulsion may be applied to the following school year. It shall be the decision of the proper school administrator, after weighing the facts and circumstances, as to which corrective measures are appropriate or adequate.

1. **Academic Misconduct** - A student shall not cheat on tests or other school assignments, or plagiarize. The use of any means to bring unauthorized information to a testing or assignment scenario is cheating. Any student caught cheating on a quiz, test, or project will receive a zero and may be subject to disciplinary action. Any student who steals the instructional materials from a teacher or staff member will be subject to disciplinary action. Any student who knowingly provides a term paper, project, or test information, including any standardized test, for another student will be subject to disciplinary action. In the event a student is caught cheating on a standardized test, the proctor shall take the student's test booklet and give a written account of the incident to the Building Coordinator.
2. **Alcohol and Other Drugs** - No student shall possess, conceal, use, purchase, offer to purchase, sell, give, distribute, supply or otherwise transmit, or be under the influence of any drug, prescription drug or counterfeit drug, the use or possession of which is prohibited by law or school policy. Nor shall students possess, conceal, use, purchase, offer to sell, give, distribute, supply or otherwise transmit any drug paraphernalia or instruments, such as pipes, roach clips, syringes, hypodermic needles, cocaine spoons or kits, or any other items normally or actually used for the packaging, conveyance, dispensation or use of alcohol or other drugs. Failure to comply with this rule will be cause for suspension or expulsion from school, school property, and school activities. Counseling and/or treatment may be advised through an outside agency. Offenses are accumulative during elementary school, middle school, and high school years.
3. **Appearance and Dress** - Students shall not violate school rules pertaining to appearance and dress. Students shall attend school dressed in a manner which is clean, not hazardous to their safety or to the safety of others, and which does not detract from the educational environment. (Refer to **Guidelines for Student Dress**.)
4. **Attendance** - A student shall comply with school attendance regulations. No student shall be absent from all or any portion of regularly scheduled classes or other mandatory activities without school authorization and parental consent. Presence in unauthorized areas, such as the school parking lot during the school day, without a pass or without permission of a staff member, shall be considered a violation of this provision. Leaving the school campus without the permission of authorized school personnel shall also be a violation of this provision. Repeated tardiness to school or to specific classes shall also be considered a violation of this provision and may result in suspension or expulsion. (Refer to **School Attendance Policy Guidelines**.)
5. **Civil Compliance** - No student shall violate any State Statutes or City Ordinance while under school authority.
6. **Damage or Destruction of Property** - A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to or destruction of any school property or property belonging to another person.
7. **Disruption of School** - A student shall not by use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, or any other conduct, intentionally cause substantial disruption or obstruction of the process or function of the school. Neither shall he/she urge other students to engage in such conduct.
8. **Explosives** - A student shall not offer to sell, sell, give as a gift, possess, handle, transmit, conceal, or use any fireworks, explosive device, or substance that can be used as an explosive.
9. **Extortion** - A student shall not compel or attempt to compel any person to give up anything of value by means of any expressed or implied threat, harassment, intimidation, or injury to person, property, or reputation.
10. **Fighting/Assault/Unauthorized Touching** - A student shall not engage in unauthorized touching, fighting or otherwise cause physical injury or behave in such a way that could threaten to cause physical injury to staff, other students, or other individuals.
11. **Forgery/Falsification/Misleading School Personnel** - A student shall not forge the name of another person or falsify times, dates, grades, addresses, or any other data whether orally or in writing. A student may not intentionally mislead or withhold information from a school official regarding incidents involving student conduct.
12. **Gambling** - A student shall not gamble or assist others to gamble; e.g., card playing will not be permitted.
13. **Gang Paraphernalia** - Students shall not use or possess gang-related literature or names on person, books, or property.
14. **Harassment/Bullying/Hazing** - A student shall not harass, bully, haze, persecute, intimidate, insult, abuse or participate in any act that injures, degrades, or disgraces any student, staff or other school employee. Any speech or action that is

inappropriate because of its subject matter (i.e. gender, sexual, ethnic, or religious and/or disability) and creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive learning environment is prohibited. Harassment, intimidation or bullying is defined as any intentional written, verbal, or physical act that one student exhibits towards another student more than once that both: 1) causes mental or physical harm to the other student, and 2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment. Cyber communication and dating violence are considered under this policy.

15. **Identification** - All students must promptly, upon request, identify themselves to school authorities.
16. **Inappropriate Behavior/Other Conduct** - It is recognized that no list of prohibited conduct can specifically encompass every action, which may become a subject of discipline. **All school personnel shall have the authority to impose discipline upon a student for conduct not set forth herein if it substantially disrupts or interferes with the good order, discipline, operation, or educational process of the school, or if it materially is or poses a threat to the safety of persons or property.**
17. **Inappropriate Use of Technology** - The inappropriate use of technology is subject to disciplinary action. Inappropriate use of CAMERA PHONES is prohibited in the school zone. The use of any technology to videotape or photograph persons or school property without the prior expressed consent of a school official is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, recording verbal conversations or physical altercations involving students and/or staff. Technology includes, but is not limited to, the use of computers, copiers, fax machines, cell phones/camera phones, gaming units, personal music devices, digital cameras and recorders. See computer use agreement.
18. **Insubordination/Disrespect** - A student shall comply with directives and accept Board authorized discipline and punishment from teachers, student teachers, educational aides, substitute teachers, administrators, or other school personnel.
19. **Intimidation or Threats** - A student shall not threaten with physical violence or coerce by any means, any student, teacher, school employee, or other individual. Nor shall a student urge another student or any other person to employ threats of intimidation. Any student who uses intimidation or threat of force using gang or group affiliation may be disciplined more severely.
20. **Laser Pens and Similar Devices** - Due to the potential for harm to persons and property, laser pens and other inappropriate electronic devices will be considered prohibited items on Gahanna Public Schools property. Possession or use could result in suspension. Parents may retrieve the confiscated item(s).
21. **Possession of Stolen Property** - A student shall not receive, retain, or possess school or private property knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, it has been stolen.
22. **Profanity/Abusive Language/Obscenity** - A student shall not use profane, vulgar, racially, religiously or sexually derogatory language or any other type of improper language. Nor shall a student use profane, vulgar, or any other type of improper gestures or signs.
23. **School Bus Violation** - A student shall not interfere with or disrupt the operation of a school bus by activities dangerous to its safe operation including, but not limited to, failing to remain seated, throwing objects out the window or at passengers or at the driver, shouting or other disorderly conduct which can cause physical harm, emotional stress, or diversion of the driver's attention. Students shall conduct themselves in a safe and orderly manner while waiting to board the bus and after leaving the bus. They shall not trespass or impose on nearby property.
24. **Sexual Misconduct** - Students are not to hold hands or walk with arms around each other or display any other physical affection while on school premises, under school authority, or while attending any school-sponsored activities. "Sexual misconduct" includes public indecency, having sexual contact with another with or without consent, and sexually harassing comments and behavior. Students should report such conduct to a teacher or administrator.
25. **Theft** - A student shall not take or acquire the property of the school or any other person without authorization.
26. **Throwing of Objects** - Students are not permitted to throw any objects including snowballs and ice on school property or within school jurisdiction.
27. **Tobacco** - No student shall offer to sell, possess, or use tobacco or have a cigarette lighter, e-cigarette, and/or matches.

28. **Trespassing** - A student shall not enter upon school grounds or into school buildings to which the student is not assigned, except with the permission of an appropriate administrator of that building or to attend a school-sponsored event in which his/her regularly-assigned school is involved or where students from his/her school have been invited to attend.
29. **Unauthorized Sales** - A student shall not sell, buy, exchange, or distribute or offer to sell, buy, exchange, or distribute any service or product without prior authorization of the building principal.
30. **Unauthorized Use of Fire** - A student shall not start an unauthorized fire, initiate a bomb threat or false fire alarm, fail to report a fire, or tamper with safety equipment. Neither should a student possess an incendiary device on school property.
31. **Violation of School Discipline Procedures** - The violation of conditions of student suspensions or other disciplinary procedures shall be considered a separate disciplinary violation and shall be subject to additional penalties. Students who repeatedly violate the Student Code of Conduct may also be subject to additional disciplinary action.
32. **Weapons and Dangerous Instruments** - No student shall sell, possess, handle, transmit, conceal, use, distribute, supply, or purchase or offer to sell, possess, handle, transmit, conceal, use, distribute, supply, or purchase any object that is considered as a weapon, a dangerous instrument, or is a look-alike weapon. Weapons and dangerous instruments shall include any object, which is used or may be used to inflict physical harm or property damage. Examples, which are not meant to be all-inclusive, are knives, guns, chains, and sharpened sticks. **Unawareness of the possession of weapons or dangerous instruments on school property does not absolve the student of responsibility for possession of that object.**

**Our sensitivity to a nationwide concern for the safety of students underlies our adherence to a zero tolerance on weapons.**

#### **REMOVAL, SUSPENSION, EXPULSION, AND PERMANENT EXCLUSION OF STUDENTS**

The Board of Education recognizes that exclusion from the educational program of the schools, whether by emergency removal, suspension, expulsion, or permanent exclusion is the most severe sanction that can be imposed on a student in this district, and one that cannot be imposed without due process.

For purposes of this policy and the Superintendent's administrative guidelines, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. **"Emergency removal"** shall be the exclusion of a student who poses a continuing danger to District property or persons in the District or whose behavior presents an on-going threat of disrupting the educational process provided by the District.
- B. **"Suspension"** shall be the temporary exclusion of a student by the school building administrator from the District's program for a period not to exceed ten (10) school days. The student may not return to school until the days are served. Failure to follow this directive may result in additional days of suspension. If at the time of a suspension there are fewer days remaining in the school year than the number of days of the suspension, the superintendent may apply any or all of the remaining period to the following school year.
- C. **"Expulsion"** shall be the exclusion of a student from the schools of this district for a period not to exceed eighty (80) school days unless the incident involves a firearm. If at the time of an expulsion there are fewer days remaining in the school year than the number of days of the expulsion, the superintendent may apply any or all of the remaining periods to the following school year. If a student brings a firearm on school property in a school vehicle, or to any school sponsored activity, he/she shall be expelled for one (1) year unless the superintendent reduces the punishment for reasons related to the specific circumstances. The superintendent may also expel a student for up to one (1) year if the student brings a knife onto school property in a school vehicle or to any school sponsored activity. A student may also be expelled for a year if he/she possesses a firearm or knife at school or any other property owned or controlled by the Board which a firearm or knife was initially brought onto district property by another person. In compliance with federal law, the superintendent shall also refer any student expelled for possession of a firearm to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system serving the district.

## PERMANENT EXCLUSION

In accordance with the law, the Board of Education may seek to permanently exclude a student sixteen (16) years of age or older who has been convicted or adjudicated delinquent for the reason of the following offenses:

- A. Carrying a concealed weapon or conveying or possessing a deadly weapon or dangerous ordinance on property owned or controlled by a board of education or at an activity held under the auspices of this board.
- B. Possessing, selling, or offering to sell controlled substances on property owned or controlled by a board of education or at an activity under the auspices of this board.
- C. Complicity to commit any of the above offenses, regardless of where this complicity occurred.

In accordance with law, any student sixteen (16) years of age or older, who has been convicted or adjudicated delinquent for committing the following offenses may be subject to permanent exclusion:

- A. Rape, gross sexual imposition, or felonious sexual penetration.
- B. Murder, manslaughter, or felonious or aggravated assault.
- C. Complicity to commit offenses described in paragraphs A and B, regardless of where the complicity occurs.

## GAHANNA-JEFFERSON SCHOOL BOARD APPROVED DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

### Introduction

It is the primary concern of the Gahanna-Jefferson Board of Education that educational and co-curricular programs for all students precede in an orderly and non-disruptive manner. The sale, use, or possession of intoxicants, illegal drugs, counterfeit drugs, or other controlled substances by students is an obstacle to this objective and an interference with the rights of students to receive quality academic instruction.

The Gahanna-Jefferson Board of Education recognizes that individuals who are experiencing problems with alcohol and other drugs are in need of assistance. The type of assistance needed may vary; however, the district is committed to work cooperatively with student and family to help provide alternatives from which these individuals can benefit. Such school district resources as student groups, parent groups, school counselors, school psychologists, and special transitional programs are to be encouraged, made available, and recommended. Students and parents will also be given information about outside agencies and encouraged to take advantage of their services and programs.

Student alcohol and other drug education and referral to counseling resources shall be viewed as instructional and rehabilitative, not as an alternative to the disciplinary measures specified in this policy.

### Statement of Policy

Students of the Gahanna-Jefferson Public School District shall not possess, conceal, use, purchase, offer to purchase, sell, give, distribute, supply, or otherwise transmit, offer to sell, give, distribute, supply or otherwise transmit, or be under the influence of any drug, prescription drug, or counterfeit drug, the use or possession of which is prohibited by law or school policy. Nor shall students possess, conceal, use, purchase, offer to purchase, sell, give, distribute, supply, or otherwise transmit, any drug paraphernalia or instruments, such as pipes, roach clips, syringes, hypodermic needles, cocaine spoons or kits or any other items normally or actually used for packaging, conveyance, dispensation, or use of alcohol or other drugs. Such conduct is prohibited as follows:

- A. At school bus stops or on any property owned, leased by, or under the control of the Gahanna-Jefferson Board of Education, including vehicles used for the transport of students.
- B. On/off school grounds during school hours, including the time immediately preceding and after school.
- C. On/off school grounds while at a school sponsored activity, event, or function or on school grounds while the school or grounds are being used for school activities.

This policy will be subject to enforcement and/or disciplinary action by the administration during the course of the school year, including classes and other school sponsored or sanctioned activities during the summer or other school breaks. Additionally, offenses in violation of this policy are accumulative:

- A. during a student's elementary school years.
- B. during a student's middle school years beginning with a first offense level of discipline at middle school.
- C. during a student's high school years beginning with a first offense level discipline at high school.

## Offenses and Disciplinary Action

The actions set forth below will be considered routine disciplinary measures for each category and occurrence of offense and shall be administered in accordance with the policies and regulations of the Gahanna-Jefferson Board of Education. By “routine disciplinary measures” it is intended that the penalties delineated below shall be considered the standard penalty imposed for the offense described.

Students who voluntarily request assistance or counseling in situations where no offense, as specified below, has been detected by school officials, will not be deemed in violation of school policy based on information divulged. In situations where an offense, as specified below, has been detected by school officials, violations of this policy will not necessarily be excused because the student has requested counseling.

### Alcohol and Other Drugs: Policy

#### 1. Selling/Distribution

No student shall sell, transmit, distribute, supply, or offer to sell, transmit, distribute, or supply any quantity of alcohol, illegal drugs, counterfeit drugs, controlled substances, drug paraphernalia or instruments, or prescription drugs.

##### **A. 1st Offense:**

1. Parent(s) will be notified immediately and the students will be removed from school for the remainder of the day.
2. Police shall be notified.
3. Consultation with parent(s) and student emphasizing available education and counseling services for alcohol and other drug evaluation procedures will be conducted.
4. The student shall be suspended for ten (10) days and may be recommended for expulsion.
5. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles and the Juvenile Court will be notified for the purpose of suspending the temporary instruction permit or operator’s license or denying the opportunity to obtain such a permit or license until the student becomes age 18 and earns a high school diploma or GED.

##### **B. 2nd or Subsequent Offenses:**

1. Parent(s) will be notified immediately and the students will be removed from school for the remainder of the day.
2. Police shall be notified.
3. Consultation with parent(s) and student emphasizing available education and counseling services for alcohol and other drug evaluation procedures will be conducted.
4. The student shall be suspended for ten (10) days and recommended for expulsion.

#### 2. Use/Possession/Purchase

No student shall possess, conceal, use, purchase, offer to purchase drug paraphernalia or instruments, such as pipes, roach clips, syringes, hypodermic needles, cocaine spoons or kits or any other items normally or actually used for packaging, conveyance, dispensation, or use of alcohol or other drugs. Nor shall any student use, be under the influence of, possess, conceal, have control of, purchase or attempt to purchase intoxicants, illegal drugs, counterfeit drugs, controlled substances, or prescription drugs when such use, possession, or control is prohibited by law, school policies or regulations of the Board of Education.

Students may possess or use prescription and non-prescription medications consistent with School District Medication Policy (see Medication Policy).

##### **A. 1st Offense:**

1. Parent(s) will be notified, and the student will be removed from school for the remainder of the day.
2. Police shall be notified.
3. The nurse will be notified, and the emergency medical rescue squad will be called, if necessary.
4. The student shall lose parking privileges for the remainder of the year.
5. Parent/guardian of the offending student shall choose one of the following options: The student will be suspended for ten (10) days from school. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles and the Juvenile Court will be notified for the purpose of suspending the temporary instruction permit or

operator's license or denying the opportunity to obtain such a permit or license until the student becomes age 18, earns a high school diploma or GED.

or

The student will be suspended for seven (7) days from school with the agreement to complete an evaluation that includes an educational component pertaining to alcohol and other drugs. Such evaluation shall be documented by a certified counselor as agreed to by school officials, parents/guardians, and the student. A written copy of the evaluation must be sent to school officials including findings and recommendations for the student.

**B. 2<sup>nd</sup> or Subsequent Offense:**

1. Parent(s) will be notified, and the student will be removed from school for the remainder of the day.
2. Police shall be notified.
3. The nurse will be notified, and the emergency medical rescue squad will be called, if necessary.
4. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles and the Juvenile Court will be notified for the purpose of suspending the temporary instruction permit or operator's license or denying the opportunity to obtain such a permit or license until the student becomes age 18, earns a high school diploma, or GED.

The student will be suspended for ten (10) days and a recommendation for expulsion with no alternative option for lesser penalty.

**GAHANNA-JEFFERSON SCHOOL BOARD APPROVED STUDENT TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

The purpose of this agreement is to define the acceptable use of district- and student-owned technologies. All District-owned technologies are provided for educational purposes only, whether used on or off campus.

The Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools is committed to the belief that technology skills are a critical component of a *21<sup>st</sup> Century Education*, and is also vital to all areas of the *Gahanna-Jefferson Graduate Profile*. We are, therefore, pleased to be able to offer our students access to a wide and expanding range of technologies to support student learning and growth through local and global communication, collaboration, research opportunities, and resource sharing.

Technology, like all extremely powerful tools, can be intentionally or unintentionally misused. One of the *Graduate Profile* goals is to use technology *responsibly and honestly*, and this document is a tool to help outline the proper and ethical use of the vast range of district and personal technologies available to our students. Most often this focus is on Internet and district computer network use, but we touch upon other technologies as well. It is impossible to specify every possible use or misuse of technology, so while these outlines establish a framework of understanding students are encouraged to seek the advice of district staff with any questions about proper and improper technology use. *Due to the rapidly changing technology environment within Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools, the district reserves the right, at our sole discretion, to change, modify or otherwise alter these terms and conditions at any time. Such modifications shall become effective immediately upon the posting thereof in the Technology area of the district's public website, available at (<http://www.gahannaschools.org/District/DistrictTechnology.aspx>). Please visit this area on a regular basis to keep yourself apprised of any changes.*

It is also important to understand that while the Board has taken available precautions to restrict and/or control student access to material on the Internet that is obscene, objectionable, inappropriate, and/or harmful to minors, it is impossible for the Board to completely prevent access to all objectionable and/or controversial materials that may be found on the Internet. If your child intentionally or unintentionally accesses objectionable material on the Internet or via any other district or personally owned technology, the Board and its employees, administrators, or officers, cannot be held responsible for materials encountered. It is the responsibility of the individual student to immediately move away from that content, and notify his or her teacher when appropriate. Parents shall accept responsibility for communicating their own parental guidance concerning the acceptable use of the Internet and other technologies both inside and outside the Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools environment. It is critical that parents have these conversations with their children, because as with many other things involving minors there are situations in which parents may be held legally liable for the actions of their minor children.



Internet access provides our students with the ability to explore research materials and interact with individuals and groups worldwide. This *21<sup>st</sup> Century Skill* is a requirement for effective participation in an increasingly global environment and in local employment opportunities. However, not all Internet resources have educational value, and some may be inappropriate. While a best effort attempt is made to use Internet filtering to help students avoid resource-wasting and inappropriate sites, students are reminded that all district equipment is provided for educational purposes only. In situations where resource-wasting or inappropriate material is encountered, the user is “one click away” from removing that material from their screen and it is the user’s responsibility to do so.

Also, it is important to remember that the Internet and many other current and developing technologies are intended for collaboration and sharing, and as a result it is best to consider *everything* done with these technologies as public. Student Internet activity in particular may be tracked by outside parties, so it is critical that each student protects his or her network and other account information and passwords as they will be held responsible for activity through their personal and unique account. Students should never share this information with others, nor should they use the login credentials of others. Students are expected not only to avoid illegal use of district and personally owned technologies, but to in all cases use these tools intelligently and ethically, and not to the detriment of themselves, the district, or others. Not only is this a critical component of *21<sup>st</sup> Century Citizenship*, it is also important to remember that parents and guardians are legally responsible for their student’s activity so it is beneficial to stress these points and your expectations with your student.

District technologies are provided, and student technologies may be allowed, solely for the support of District academic programs and student learning. Examples of acceptable technology use include:

1. Appropriate collaboration and exchange of information for research and other project purposes;
2. Developing a familiarity with the technology for educational and employment purposes;
3. Expanding the opportunities for relevant technology use to produce reports, multimedia, and other assigned projects;
4. Developing *Graduate Profile* goals of becoming a *Responsible Community Member*, *Comprehensive Problem Solver*, *Proficient Technology User*, *Collaborative Team Member*, and an *Effective Communicator*.

In exchange for the use of available technology resources, the undersigned student and parent/guardian understand and agree to the following terms and conditions.

- A. The use of technology, whether district-provided or student-owned, is a privilege which may be revoked by the District at any time and for any reason. Reasons for revoking privileges include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Improper use of the technology,
  - b. Failure to properly protect and secure the technology,
  - c. Altering or modifying system software and/or hardware,
  - d. Intentionally or unintentionally adding viruses, spyware, and other harmful programs to District systems,
  - e. Placing unauthorized information or comments on District-owned or publicly accessible servers,
  - f. Using the technology to cause embarrassment or harm to other individuals or groups.

The District reserves the right to remove files, limit or deny technology access, and refer offending students for other disciplinary actions consistent with the Student Handbook.

- B. Students will not use their District-approved computer access to obtain, view, download, or otherwise gain access to materials deemed unlawful, obscene, pornographic, abusive, hateful, or otherwise objectionable.
- C. The District retains ownership of all District-provided technologies and any contents thereof. We reserve the right to remove any material which the District, at its sole discretion, believes to be questionable and/or is having a negative impact on District technology systems. Students are responsible for the protection of their own important files through regular backups of those files to USB or other available storage media. The District assumes no responsibility for lost files.
- D. Students are expected to be *Responsible Community Members* and to *use technology responsibly, honestly, and ethically*. Students **shall**:
  - a. Polite, courteous, and respectful in your messages to others.
  - b. The use of language appropriate to school situations in all communications made through the Board’s computers, networks, and other technologies.
  - c. Diligently delete their unneeded files regularly to minimize District storage needs.
  - d. Protect their critical files by making regular backups of their important work.
  - e. Comply with the Student Handbook.

Students **shall not**:

- f. Use obscene, profane, vulgar, sexually explicit, defamatory, or abusive language in your messages.
- g. Reveal names, addresses, phone numbers, or passwords of yourself or other students, family members, teachers,

- administrators, or other staff members via the Internet or any other medium.
- h. Transmit pictures or other information that could be used to establish your identity or the identity of others without prior approval of a teacher.
  - i. Transmit pictures or other information about fellow students, teachers, or groups.
  - j. Agree to meet any person encountered online without prior parent approval.
- E. All information services and features contained on District network resources and other technologies are intended for the private use of registered staff and students *only* and any use of these resources for commercial for-profit or other unauthorized purposes (i.e. advertisements, political lobbying), in any form, is expressly forbidden.
  - F. While all reasonable efforts are made to ensure reliable operation of, and access to, all district technologies, the District cannot guarantee uninterrupted access or use of the network or other technologies, nor can it be held responsible for loss of data due to electrical or mechanical failure or human error.
  - G. District network resources are intended for exclusive use by registered users. The student is responsible for the use of his/her user ID password and/or access privilege. Any problems which arise from the use of a student's user ID are the responsibility of the ID holder. Use of a user ID by someone other than to whom it was originally registered is forbidden and may be grounds for loss of access privileges. Students may not allow other users to utilize their personal and unique login IDs and passwords.
  - H. Any misuse of technology access will result in suspension of privileges and/or other disciplinary action determined by the District consistent with the Student Handbook. Misuse shall include, but not be limited to:
    - a. Intentionally seeking information on, obtaining copies of, or modifying files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users;
    - b. Misrepresenting other users on the Network or through other technology-based tools;
    - c. Using any technology in any way that causes concern, worry, or embarrassment to any student, District staff member, or other;
    - d. Disrupting the operation of the Network or other technology-based tools through abuse;
    - e. Malicious use of District-provided or student-owned devices through hate mail, harassment, profanity, vulgar statements, or discriminatory remarks;
    - f. Interfering with others' use of District technologies;
    - g. Extensive use for non-curriculum related communication;
    - h. Illegal or unethical modification of systems including, but not limited to:
      - i. The illegal installation of copyrighted or unauthorized software;
      - ii. Unauthorized downloading, copying, deleting, altering or other misuse of licensed copyrighted software;
      - iii. Using the Internet to engage in "hacking" or other unlawful activities;
      - iv. Accessing, or attempting to access, the personal files of other users or the District on the District's network or other technologies;
      - v. The intentional or unintentional degradation or disruption of system performance;
      - vi. Attempts to bypass internet filtering controls;
      - vii. Transmission of any material in violation of any State or Federal law or regulation, or Board policy;
      - viii. Malicious use of the Board's computers/network to develop programs that harass other users, infiltrate or attempt to infiltrate any computer or computer system and/or damage the software components of a computer, or any other illegal or unethical activity;
      - ix. Any violation of the Student Handbook.
  - I. The District reserves the right to log Internet use and monitor electronic mail, file server space utilization, and other technology system processes and services. Much of this monitoring is required to ensure the efficient and effective operation of District technologies and to proactively address technological and other issues and can occur without the prior notification of students or staff. AUP infractions and legal violations found during any routine or targeted monitoring may be actionable under the policies and guidelines of the District and State and Federal laws.
  - J. The student may only log on and use the network under the supervision of a staff member and only with his/her assigned unique user ID. Students must protect their personal login credentials, as they will be held responsible for activities performed using these credentials.
  - K. Downloading of unauthorized programs or information onto the Board's hard drives is prohibited; all downloads must have prior approval and be saved to thumb drives, CD ROMs or other authorized external devices. If a student transfers files from online information services, the student must scan all files with a virus-detection program before opening the file for use. If a student transfers a file or software program that infects the Network with a virus and causes damage, the student may be liable for any and all repair costs to restore the network and attached devices to full functionality.
  - L. The District reserves the right to disable or remove a network user account to prevent unauthorized activity, and will not be held responsible for any file loss or inconvenience should this account activity become necessary.
  - M. Any damage done to the District's network or equipment by a user not following the guidelines described in this document is the sole responsibility of that user.
  - N. Students are prohibited from accessing or participating in online "chat rooms" and must secure prior approval from a teacher or

building administrator before joining and/or participating in online services such as; Listservs, Blogs, Podcasts, “electronic communities”, or other forms of direct electronic communication.

- O. Students will at no time post personal information about, or photographs of, themselves or others on the Web or using any other technology.
- P. Privacy in communication of the Internet and the Network is not guaranteed. The Board reserves the right to monitor, review, and inspect any directories, files, and/or messages residing on or sent using the Board's computers/network. Messages relating to or in support of illegal or unethical activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- Q. Use of the Internet and any information procured from the Internet is at the student's own risk. The Board is not responsible for any damage a user suffers, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions. The Board is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. Information (including text, graphics, audio, video, etc.) from Internet sources used in student papers, reports, and projects should be cited the same as references to printed materials.
- R. The Board has implemented technology protection measures that protect against Internet access to visual displays that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors. The Board also monitors online activity of students in an effort to restrict access to child pornography and other material that is obscene, objectionable, and/or inappropriate for a school setting and/or harmful to minors. Nevertheless, parents/guardians are advised that determined users may be able to gain access to information, communication, and/or services on the Internet which the Board of Education has not authorized for educational purposes and/ or which they and/or their parents/guardians may find inappropriate, offensive, objectionable, or controversial. Parents/Guardians assume this risk by consenting to allow their students to participate in the use of the Internet.
- S. Students accessing the Internet through any device, whether District-provided or student-owned, assume personal responsibility and liability, both civil and criminal, for unauthorized or inappropriate use of the Internet.
- T. As we move toward 24/7 education, students are increasingly likely to be loaned district equipment in support of the District’s educational goals. All of the components of this Acceptable Use Policy shall apply when using any District-provided technology, whether on or off campus. Students who are loaned any District technology also agree to be bound by the conditions specified on the District’s *IT Equipment Loan Policy*.

### **Summary of GJPS Bullying and Other Forms of Aggressive Behavior Policy**

- 1. Harassment, intimidation or bullying, whether by other students, staff or third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This includes various forms of aggressive behavior, including, but not limited to, physical, verbal and psychological abuse.
- 2. Harassment, intimidation, and bullying means any intentional written, verbal, graphic, or physical act that a student or group of students exhibits towards another student(s):
  - a. more than once and
  - b. the behavior causes mental or physical harm and
  - c. is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive so that
  - d. it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.
- 3. Aggressive behavior can be defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated enough, or severe enough to negatively impact a student’s educational, physical, or emotional well-being. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - a. stalking
  - b. bullying
  - c. cyber bullying (includes internet, PDA, cellular phones, etc)
  - d. intimidation
  - e. menacing
  - f. coercion
  - g. name-calling
  - h. taunting
  - i. making threats
  - j. hazing
- 4. The policy applies at school, to and from school and at any school-sponsored event.

#### Reporting

- 1. **Parents:** Any parent or guardian who believes that their child has been a target of bullying behavior is encouraged to immediately report such behavior to school personnel.
  - School personnel will document the concern, or provide the documentation form to the parent, and forward the information to the principal or assistant principal. Administration will investigate allegations and complete a written summary of the findings.
- 2. **Students:** All students are encouraged to report such behavior to a staff member and may maintain anonymity if desired. However, anonymity may limit the scope and outcome of an investigation.

3. **School personnel:** Staff is required to report any suspected bullying or harassment behavior to administration. They may make a verbal, informal report, which the administrator will document or they may complete a report form themselves, which allows the principal to begin the investigative process.
4. **Administrators** will:
  - a. Complete any necessary documentation and complete the investigation.
  - b. Notify the complainant of the outcome of the investigation, within the confines of educational law.
  - c. If aggressive behavior is verified, the administrator will notify the parents of the victim, as well as those of the aggressor.
  - d. Semi-annually, principals shall submit a written summary to the Superintendent of verified bullying and harassment incidents, which will then be submitted to the board and posted on the web site.

Privacy and Immunity

1. All efforts will be made to protect the identity of the complainant or witnesses. All records generated under this policy will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law.
2. A school district employee, student or volunteer shall be individually immune from liability in a civil action for damages from reporting an incident in accordance with this policy and state law.

Education and Notification

1. The district will provide training and education to staff and students related to bullying and harassment, including information related to the implementation of this policy.
2. Notice of this policy will be annually circulated to and posted in conspicuous locations in all school buildings and departments within the District. It will also be incorporated into staff, student, and parent handbooks.

**Anti-Harassment Compliance Officers**

The Board designates the following individuals to serve as “Anti-Harassment Compliance Officers” for the District. They are hereinafter referred to as “Compliance Officers.”

<p>Matt Cygnor Human Resources Director 614-471-7065 160 S. Hamilton Road Gahanna, OH 43230</p>	<p>Sue Wieging Special Education Director 614-471-7065 160 S. Hamilton Road Gahanna, OH 43230</p>
---	---

The Compliance Officers are available during regular school/work hours to discuss Title IX questions, sexual violence concerns, and to assist students, other members of the School District community, and third parties. Compliance Officers shall accept sexual violence complaints directly from any members of the School District community or a visitor to the District, as well as those initially filed within a school building administrator. Upon receiving a complaint, the Compliance Officer or designee will discuss confidentiality issues with the complainant (and his/her parent, if the complainant is a minor), and open an investigation following the proper procedure.

**GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT DRESS**

All Gahanna-Jefferson Middle Schools have a concern for the health, safety, and general well-being of each student in establishing dress guidelines. Therefore, we reserve the right to restrict dress, accessories, and/or other aspects of appearance that are inconsistent with safety, good health practices, community norms, and are disruptive to the educational process – both during the regular school day as well as at all school-related activities. Enforcement of the dress code is the responsibility of the staff and the administration.

Students should govern their dress and grooming by maintaining reasonable standards of neatness and cleanliness. It is desired that these dress guidelines will assist students in making appropriate choices that serve as an indication of their pride in themselves and in their school. Attempts by students to call undue attention to themselves and/or to cause disruption of the educational process will not be permitted. It is hoped that the following dress guidelines will promote understanding and cooperation among students, parents, and the school.

**Unacceptable apparel includes, but is not limited to, the following:**

1. Hats, headgear, headbands, sweatbands, bandannas, biker gloves, or sunglasses are not to be worn in the building.
2. Distracting hairstyles, make up, and/or body piercing will not be permitted.
3. Shirts must have sleeves that cover the top of shoulder. Strap T-shirts (tank tops and muscle shirts), fishnet-type shirts, sheer shirts, halters, and shirts that expose the midriff and/or low-cut necklines are not acceptable wearing apparel.
4. Shorts/skirts must be appropriate in length and even with fingertips when arms are relaxed at sides. Cutoffs pants, pajamas, biking shorts, long underwear, and other similar items are not to be worn at school.
5. Pants must be secured at the natural waistline. Underwear should never be visible.
6. Clothing that is exceedingly torn (including jeans with holes in inappropriate places) or that advertises alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs; contains gang-related symbolism; is suggestive, offensive, or profane; has sexual connotations; promotes, puts down, insults, threatens, or harasses any member of the school staff or student body based upon issues such as gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or disabilities; or creates a hostile, intimidating, harassing, or offensive learning environment is unacceptable and cannot be worn in school or at school-related activities.
7. Accessories, (including jewelry), that advertise alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs; contain gang-related symbolism (including chains); are suggestive, offensive, or profane; have sexual connotations; or promote, put down, insult, threaten, or harass any member of the school staff or student body based upon issues such as gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or disabilities; or create a hostile, intimidating, harassing, or offensive learning environment are unacceptable and cannot be worn in school or at school-related activities.
8. Shoes will be worn at all times and are to have backs for safety. Flip flops, slides, or other types of sandals without backs are prohibited. Footwear that may be harmful to the flooring or present a safety concern may not be worn in the building. Examples include, but are not limited to, shoes with wheels and athletic cleats.
9. Outerwear coats are not to be worn inside the building and must be stored in lockers.
10. Book bags are not permitted in the classrooms and must be stored in lockers.

**Violations of the Dress Guidelines may result in the following actions:**

- A student will be asked to correct any violation of the dress guidelines. If the violation cannot be corrected at school, the parents will then be contacted to assist in correcting the violation.
- If a student must go home to change, any time out of school will be counted as unexcused.
- According to the discretion of the administration, students dressed inappropriately may be assigned an ISR for the day if appropriate dress cannot be arranged.
- Continued violation of the dress guidelines will result in disciplinary action.

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY GUIDELINES**

Regular attendance is a most important factor in the establishment of a good scholastic record. Work missed through the absence from school is very difficult to make up. **There is NO SUBSTITUTE for actual participation in the daily classroom discussion and work.**

**Classes are in session from 8:45 AM to 3:30 PM.** Students are not permitted in the building after 3:45 PM unless supervised by a member of the faculty. The building office hours are from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Students are **NOT** permitted to enter the building until 8:30 AM unless they are involved in an approved activity. Students are required to be in school on time for their first class. Students may not leave school between classes or before their last class without the permission of the office.

**1. Call-Ins/Notification of Absences**

Knowing where your sons and daughters are during the school day is very important to the school as well as you. The school and the parent/guardian need to work together to assure that we keep each other informed when students are not in school.

- a. The school is requesting that the parent/guardian make every effort to notify the school in **ALL** cases of student absence. Calls should be made to the school between the hours of 7:30 AM and 9:30 AM. The number to call is 614- 337-3730.
- b. It is desired that the parent/guardian notify the school in advance of an absence when possible. For example, a phone call or a note from a parent/guardian on Wednesday to notify the school of an absence on Friday would be greatly appreciated.

- c. If a student is absent, the school will attempt to contact the parent/guardian who has **NOT** notified the school. If no contact is made, an explanation from the parent/guardian will be necessary. **If the school does not receive an explanation of the absence within three (3) school days, the absence will automatically be considered unexcused.**
- d. A student who signs in before 9:45 AM will be considered tardy. If it is after 9:45 AM, then the student will be marked as a half day of absence. If a student signs out before 9:45 AM, then it would be a full day of absence. A student who leaves after 2:30 PM will be marked as an early dismissal. Any student absent from school for 61 minutes or more will be marked as half day absence. Whether the absence from the time missed at school is considered excused or unexcused is dependent upon the reason given and to the discretion of the principal or his/her designee.

**2. Excusable Reasons for Absence**

An excused absence may be granted at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee. **A student will have a minimum of one school day for each day of excused absence to make up assignments.** An excused absence will only be granted for the time missed at school for the following reasons:

- A. personal illness, other health-related appointments, or professional appointments (a written physician's statement verifying the illness may be required and will be required after the tenth day of excused absences allowed by the District in a school year)
- B. illness in the family necessitating the presence of the child (a written physician's statement and an explanation as to why the child's absence was necessary may be required)
- C. quarantine of the home (as determined by the proper health officials)
- D. death of a relative (limited to a period of three (3) days unless a reasonable cause may be shown for a longer absence)
- E. necessary work at home due to absence or incapacity of parent(s)/guardian(s) (applicable only to a child over fourteen (14) years of age)
- F. observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
- G. out-of-state travel to participate in a District-approved enrichment or extracurricular activity (up to a maximum of four (4) days per school year)
- H. emergency or other set of circumstances (as may be acceptable to the Superintendent)
- I. medically necessary leave for a pregnant student in accordance with Policy 5751
- J. service as a precinct officer at a primary, special, or general election in accordance with the program set forth in Policy 5725
- K. college visitation (not to exceed three (3) days per school year)
- L. family travel (which is included within the 10 days of excused absences allowed by the District)

The Superintendent may excuse a student over fourteen (14) years of age from attendance at school for a future limited period for the purpose of performing essential work directly or exclusively for his/her parents or guardians. Such excuse should not exceed five (5) days and may at the discretion of the Superintendent be renewed for five (5) additional days. At no time, however, shall such excuse cause a student to be absent from school for a period of more than ten (10) consecutive days.

At the discretion of the Superintendent or his/her designee, a student may be excused for a longer period of time than ten (10) days if a child's parent or guardian has recently died or become totally or partially incapacitated and there is no older brother or sister living in the home who is out of school. In such case, the Superintendent may request a certificate of a physician attesting to the physical condition of the parent or guardian.

**3. Needs Medical/Court Excuse (NMCE)**

After a student has been absent ten (10) days (excused or unexcused) in any school year, a letter will be sent to the home and may request a Needs Medical/Court Excuse (NMCE) for any additional days missed. This will require that the student have a doctor/dentist/court excuse for every absence in order for it to be excused. A student has three (3) days to provide a doctor, dentist, or court excuse. If the student does not have a doctor/dentist/court excuse, the absence will be unexcused. Students with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher or a communicable illness and have been sent home by the nurse will be excused by the school. An NMCE student who gets permission from his/her parent/guardian to go

home from the clinic is unexcused. Truancy charges may be filed on a student who has five (5) or more unexcused absences after the 10th day of excused absences allowed by the District.

**4. Tardiness**

Students late to school (after 8:45 AM) must report to the office to sign in before reporting to class. Parents/Guardians must provide an explanation for the tardiness. Excessive tardies that are unexcused will result in a disciplinary action by the office. **If the school does not receive an explanation of the tardiness within three (3) school days, the tardiness will automatically be considered unexcused.**

**5. Unexcused Absences, Tardies, Early Dismissal**

The determination of whether or not the time missed from school is excused or unexcused will be at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee. Excessive absences, tardies, and early dismissals that are unexcused will result in a disciplinary action by the office. Examples of unexcused absences, tardies, and early dismissals include, but are not limited to:

- a. Cutting classes or study halls
- b. Missing the bus or a ride
- c. Oversleeping
- d. Shopping
- e. Suspension
- f. Truancy
- g. Lice (It may be unexcused if the absence related to lice is excessive.)

**No student shall leave school grounds without permission of the principal or the assistant principal.**

**6. Truancy and Habitual Absence**

For those students who have habitual or chronic attendance problems, the administrator of the building will address those problems in accordance with state law and board policy. A student shall be considered truant each day he/she is absent without excuse from his/her assigned location.

A student will be considered “habitually truant” under State law if the student is absent without a legitimate excuse for five (5) or more consecutive school days, for seven (7) or more school days in one (1) month, or twelve (12) or more school days in one (1) school year.

A student will be considered “chronically truant” under State law if the student is absent without a legitimate excuse for seven (7) or more consecutive school days, for ten (10) or more school days in one (1) month, or for fifteen (15) or more school days in one (1) year.

Legitimate excuses for the absence of a student who is otherwise habitually or chronically truant include but are not limited to:

- A. the student was enrolled in another school district;
- B. the student was excused from attendance in accordance with R.C. 3321.04; or
- C. the student has received an age and schooling certificate.

If a student is “habitually truant” and the student’s parent has failed to cause the student’s attendance, the Board authorizes the Superintendent to file a complaint with the Judge of the Juvenile Court and/or to take any other appropriate intervention actions as set forth in this Board’s policy.

If a student is “chronically truant” and the student’s parent has failed to cause the student’s attendance, the Board authorizes the Superintendent to file a complaint with the Judge of the Juvenile Court and/or to take any other appropriate intervention actions as set forth in this Board’s policy.

In order to address the attendance practices of a student who is “habitually or chronically” truant, the Board authorizes the Superintendent or designee to take any of the following intervention actions:

- A. assign the student to a truancy intervention program
- B. provide counseling to the student
- C. request or require the student’s parent to attend a parental involvement program
- D. request or require a parent to attend a truancy prevention mediation program
- E. notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles of the student’s absences
- F. take appropriate legal action
- G. assign the student to an alternative school

The Superintendent is authorized to establish an educational program for parents of truant students which is designed to encourage parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Any parent who does not complete the program is to be reported to law enforcement authorities for parental education neglect, a fourth class misdemeanor if found guilty.

Whenever any student of compulsory school age has ten (10) consecutive days or a total of fifteen (15) days of unexcused absence from school during any semester, s/he will be considered habitually absent. The Board authorizes the Superintendent or designee to inform the student and his/her parents, guardian, or custodian of the record of excessive absence as well as the District's intent to notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, if appropriate, and the Judge of the Juvenile Court of the student's excessive absence.

**7. Returning to School after an Absence**

The first day a student returns to school from any and all absences, he/she must report to the office for an excuse form. All students should make arrangements to complete missed work. **A student will have a minimum of one school day for each day of absence to make up assignments.**

If a student misses more than one (1) day of school, homework may be requested by calling the office before 11:00 AM. Work will be sent to the office by 3:30 PM. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to make arrangements to have it picked up after this time.

**8. Steps for Absence by Permission**

Appointments with a doctor, dentist, court etc., should not be made during school time. In case this should be necessary, however, the parent/guardian of the student must contact the school prior to the student's first scheduled period. If the student is released, and it is learned that the excuse was **NOT** valid, the absence will be unexcused. Students leaving or returning to the school grounds during the school day **MUST** first report to the office. Failure to sign out may result in an unexcused absence.

**9. Family Travel**

Ohio has specific compulsory attendance regulations, and Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools must comply with those statutes. Ohio Revised Code Section 3321.02 states, "every child actually resident in the state shall be amenable to the laws relating to compulsory education, and neither he nor the person in charge of him shall be excused from the operations of said sections or the penalties under them on the ground that the child's residency is seasonal, that the parent of the child is a resident of another state, or that the child has attended school for the legal period in another state."

Whenever a pre-planned absence for family travel is requested, the parent/guardian must discuss it with the principal. The length of absence should be made clear, and those involved should have an opportunity to express their views on the potential effects of the absence.

The District will only approve a student's absence for family travel when he/she will be in the company of his/her own parent/guardian or other family members but no other students' parent(s)/guardian(s), unless there are extenuating circumstances deemed appropriate by the principal. In order for the family travel to be an excused absence, it must be within the ten (10) days of excused absences allowed by the District.

If a student is absent for family travel outside of the ten (10) days of excused absences allowed by the District, he/she will be considered unexcused from school and subject to truancy regulations. The school district may be obligated to report the parent/guardian to the Franklin County Juvenile Court System and file charges of lack of compliance with the compulsory education rules. During this time period, the student may be given approximate assignments to be completed. The time missed will be counted as an authorized, unexcused absence but shall not be a factor in determining grades unless the make-up work is not completed.

In the event that the student knows in advance that he/she will be absent (e.g. family travel) for several days, the parent/guardian should send a note to the office a week in advance. The student will be given a "**Planned Absence Form.**" This form must be returned to the office before the planned absence begins. All make-up work is due on the first day the student returns from the planned absence. This work includes any tests that the student may have missed during his/her planned absence. **We strongly discourage any planned absences during the last week of any grading period or during state-wide testing.**



**10. Planned Absence (e.g. family travel, college visit, etc.)**

In the event that the student knows in advance that he/she will be absent (e.g. family travel, college visit, etc.) for several days, the parent/guardian should send a note to the office a week in advance. The student will be given a **“Planned Absence Form.”** This form must be returned to the office before the planned absence begins. All make-up work is due on the first day the student returns from the planned absence. This work includes any tests that the student may have missed during his/her planned absence. **We strongly discourage any planned absences during the last week of any grading period or during state-wide testing.**

**11. Absence on Extra-Curricular Days**

Students who are absent from school a half day or longer may not be permitted to participate in any extra-curricular activity on that day.

**GAHANNA MIDDLE SCHOOL SOUTH**  
**LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER**

**Library Information Center (LIC)**

It is the policy of Gahanna Middle School South (GMSS) LIC to provide students with the knowledge to use the LIC and to learn how to access a variety of information services and items that will enable them to use both our facility and others elsewhere. The GMSS Library Information Center is an extension of the classroom. The LIC provides an area for both teacher directed activities and independent research and study. All students are encouraged to become familiar with the LIC and its services.

**On-Line Services**

All students have access to the GMSS On-Line Catalog in both their classrooms and from home. The catalog may be accessed from home by going to the INFOhio web site, [www.infohio.org](http://www.infohio.org), and choosing MEC and then choosing Gahanna Middle School South.

**Electronic Resources**

Through the INFOhio web site, free databases such as *World Book* may be accessed. These databases are available both at school and at home. See the librarian for the user name and password to use INFOhio from home.

**Circulation Policies and Overdue Procedures**

Books may be checked out for three (3) weeks. Books may be renewed as many times as needed until a reserve is placed on the book. Books may be reserved through the library staff. No overdue fees are charged, but students are responsible for returning materials on time. Damaged or lost materials must be paid for in order for the students to receive their Grade Cards. Students will be charged the current replacement cost for lost books. Students with overdue or lost library materials will not be permitted to check out more materials until previous commitments are resolved.

**LIC Rules**

The LIC is to be used for research, independent reading, and librarian/teacher directed activities. Homework is to be done in study hall. All school rules will be enforced in the library. A verbal warning will be given and continued infractions will result in the student’s removal.

**Internet Access and Computer Use**

All Internet searches **must** be related to school work. Students may not “surf” the Web. Students may not change the settings or the desktop of the computers. Failure to comply will result in students forfeiting the right to use the computers.

**GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE GAHANNA-JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

**1. Access to Equal Educational Opportunity**

These guidelines shall be used to ensure that the Board of Education’s policy on nondiscrimination (2260) is implemented properly and in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, particularly part 104 of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (34CFR). A copy of Part 104 is provided as AG 2260A.

Notice of the Board’s policy on nondiscrimination in educational practices shall be posted throughout the District, published in any District statement regarding the availability of educational services, and in all student handbooks.

Children who have been diagnosed as having a disability and who, through a multifactor evaluation, qualify for categorical service under IDEA will be served under the existing State Special Educational regulations. Section 504 protects and safeguards all students with a mental or physical impairment which is defined as substantially limiting one (1) or more major life activities or:

- A. The student has a record of such impairment.
- B. The student is regarded as having such impairment.

The district will identify, evaluate, and provide an appropriate education for students who are disabled under Section 504.

## **2. Bus Rules/Bike Riders/Walkers**

The bus driver has the responsibility and authority similar to that of a teacher. He/She may assign seats, establish reasonable rules to maintain order, and must obey certain standards of the State in regard to bus procedures. Pupils who fail to follow regulations are subject to losing their transportation privileges. Students **MAY NOT** ride a bus other than their assigned bus without permission from the office. **Permission will only be given in emergency situations. Please DO NOT request to ride a bus to visit a friend.**

Students may ride bicycles to school. Once at school, they are to be parked in the bike racks and not ridden until after school. Bike riders may leave school grounds after school as directed. The school is not responsible for damage or theft of bicycles.

**Under no circumstances are skateboards, roller skates, or blades permitted to be ridden on school grounds.**

Students may walk to and from school. Students are advised to use sidewalks when available. Parents should encourage their child to use caution when walking to and from school.

## **3. Cafeteria Guidelines/Closed Lunch Period**

The Gahanna-Jefferson Middle Schools operate under a closed lunch period. This means that no student may leave the school grounds without obtaining permission. The parking lots are out-of-bounds to students at lunchtime.

Each student is expected to practice the general rules of good manners that one usually finds in the home. To make lunch period pleasant and relaxing for all, students are asked to do the following:

- a. Observe good standards of table manners while eating.
- b. Students will be dismissed by tables after they have cleaned their area.
- c. Leave the table and area clean and orderly. Do not drop food, wrappers, containers, etc., on the floors.
- d. Take all **trash and the tray** to the soiled-dish return window.
- e. Do not leave the cafeteria while eating or carrying food.
- f. A student may not leave the cafeteria area without permission.
- g. Failure to follow these rules will result in detentions, in-school restrictions, or Saturday sessions.

## **4. Clinic and Medications**

A part-time Registered Nurse is assigned to each elementary and middle school. There are also clinic aids available during school hours to take care of ill children, minor injuries and administration of specific medications.

If your child is complaining of being sick in the morning, please take their temperature before sending them to school. If the child is vomiting or has a temperature of 100 degree F or greater, the child must stay home from school until they are fever-free (without the use of medicine, such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen) for 24 hours.

We strongly urge that all medications be administered at home whenever possible. If a prescription medication needs to be given, please consult the prescribing physician or dentist to ascertain if the medication can be administered at times when your child is at home. We will only administer prescription medication at school if the physician feels it is absolutely necessary. Non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications require completion of the parent authorization form. ALL medications must be delivered to the school clinic by an adult in the original container.

Proper forms must be completed for any medication (prescription or non-prescription). Forms are available in the school office or online at: [www.gahannaschools.org](http://www.gahannaschools.org) under School Nurse Services quick link and then under Health Forms. Gahanna-Jefferson students with a communicable disease are excluded from school in accordance with the recommendations from the Ohio Department of Health. The Ohio Department of Health Communicable Disease Chart can be viewed on-line at:

<http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/file.asp?id=1730&type=application/pdf>

For questions or clarifications, please contact the school nurse.

## **5. Curriculum and Grading Scale**

### **Grade 6**

Language Arts  
Social Studies  
Math 6/Ace Math 6  
Science

### **Grade 7**

Language Arts  
Social Studies  
Math 7/ Accelerated Math 7  
Science

### **Grade 8**

Language Arts  
Science  
American History  
Math 8/Algebra 1/Geometry  
Academic Connections and/or Language (Spanish, French or Mandarin Chinese)

### **Related Arts**

Art	
General Music (6 <sup>th</sup> )	Design & Modeling (7 <sup>th</sup> )
Health	Strings (optional)
Physical Education	Band and/or Choir (optional)

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Related Arts Elective Courses**

Robotics & Animation	General Music and Production	Advanced PE
Medical Detectives	Performance Ensemble	

### **Grading Scale**

90 - 100 A  
80 - 89 B  
70 - 79 C  
60 - 69 D  
0 - 59 F

## **6. Directory Information**

Directory information about students who attend Gahanna-Jefferson Middle Schools will be made available upon a legitimate request unless a parent or guardian notifies the building principal in writing by September 30, 2016 that such information shall not be distributed.

## **7. Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Lockdown**

**Fire drills** are required by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys promptly and clears the building by the prescribed route given by the classroom teacher. Students are **NOT** permitted to talk during a fire drill and are to remain outside the building until a signal is given to return inside.

**Tornado drills** are announced over the P.A. system. Students will exit from rooms and move to their designated safe areas. No person is to be within 20 feet of the outside exit doors. Students are to remain quiet and in their designated safe areas until authorized to return to their classes. If a parent comes to pick up his/her child, the child will be released, but no other students are to be released from the school with them.

**Lockdown drills** will be practiced periodically throughout the school year. Each child will be instructed on what to do in case of an emergency.

## **8. Electronic Devices**

Students are discouraged from bringing to school anything that distracts or disrupts others. Cell phones, iPods, electronic games, etc. should not be brought to school unless they are needed for an approved project. Electronic communication devices are not permitted to be used during the regular school day except for recess, or when approved by a classroom teacher. The school district is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal belongings. A student who

brings a cell phone or electronic device to school is consenting to allowing the phone's data to be searched as long as the search is tied to a specific violation.

#### **9. Food and Drink**

Students must have permission from the instructor in order to bring food and/or drink into the classroom.

#### **10. Guidance Services**

Each middle school has one counselor per building. School counselors provide help for students with academic, social, and emotional needs. Counselors meet with students on an individual basis as well as parents, teachers, administrators and other building personnel to help address these needs. In addition, each school counselor is involved in testing, scheduling, and initial enrollment of students.

#### **11. Gum**

Gum chewing is not permitted in the building.

#### **12. Hallway Courtesy**

Students should only be in the halls during the exchange of classes. They need to be courteous by keeping to the right and moving quickly and quietly. Students should also stay to the right when passing through the double doors. Running in the halls is not permitted at any time. Boys and girls are not to hold hands, walk with arms around each other, or display any other physical affection on the school campus.

Any travel in the halls during class or study periods will require a pass from the teacher in charge. Students need to travel directly to their destination and return. Any student without a properly signed pass will not be permitted to continue. Students must be aware of other classrooms in session as they move around during the school day and maintain a certain degree of quiet and orderliness.

#### **13. Honor Roll**

Students who achieved Honor Roll status, which is based on the year-to-date grade point average through the third quarter, will receive special recognition at our Honors' Night in the spring.

#### **14. Instructional Materials**

The school district offers its students a large variety of books to enhance reading instruction. These books represent many styles of writing and cover a wide range of topics. Parents/guardians are invited and encouraged to review reading materials available in their child's classroom prior to such materials being read. Any parent/guardian wishing to do so should contact the classroom teacher to schedule an appointment. Books may be checked out on a short-term basis providing sufficient copies are available for student use.

#### **15. Lockers**

Locker combinations are changed each year, and a locker combination is assigned to each student at the beginning of the year. The combination is issued **ONLY** to the student who is responsible for his/her own locker and possessions. Students will be required to periodically clean their lockers. Students should **NOT** give their combination to others. **The lockers are the property of the Gahanna-Jefferson Middle Schools. The lockers and their contents are subject to inspection by authorized school personnel at any time. The Gahanna-Jefferson Middle Schools are NOT responsible for lost or stolen items. Students are responsible for promptly reporting problems with lockers to the main office.**

#### **16. Lost and Found**

Students finding any item at school should turn it in to the main office where the owner can claim it. **"Finders Are Not Keepers"** at school! In fact, keeping an item found is very close to being as dishonest as stealing! Pupils losing items should check more than once or twice at the office in attempting to find a lost item. Lost and found containers are located in the cafeteria and gym locker rooms. Unclaimed items will be given to a charitable organization.

#### **17. Pesticide Application on School Property**

Pesticides may periodically be applied to school property. Parents have the right to request prior notification of pesticide applications on school property. Any parent that wishes to have prior notifications of pesticide application should notify the building principal in writing. Prior notification will be provided to those parents who request the notification in the form of a written notice to be sent home with the child or through email.

#### **18. Pets**

Pets are not permitted in school unless they are needed for an approved project.

## **19. Physical Education**

In physical education classes, students must furnish their own towels for showering. P. E. T-shirts are sold through the school store and P.E. class. Each student is also issued a locker in the gym locker rooms. Locks may be purchased in the school store. If used properly, in conjunction with the dressing lockers, there should not be a problem of safeguarding one's clothing or P.E. apparel. Under no circumstances should cell phones be visible in the locker rooms. They should be locked in their school locker. **The Gahanna-Jefferson Middle Schools are NOT responsible for lost or stolen items.**

## **20. Pictures**

Individual student pictures are taken during registration in August and are usually available in early December. The purchase of pictures is optional, but we do require that all students have a photo taken in order to produce a yearbook.

## **21. Progress Reports and Grade Cards**

**Progress reports** are sent home to parents of all students four to five weeks into each grading period.

**Grade cards** are issued every nine weeks. Parents are asked to review the progress report and grade card with their child and consult the teacher(s) if they wish.

## **22. Security Cameras**

For students' safety and welfare, students are duly informed that their behavior may be monitored on school property and/or adjacent property by security cameras. Interior and exterior security cameras are located at each building in the Gahanna-Jefferson School District. Cameras are not located in areas where people would normally expect to have privacy. Actions recorded on these cameras may be used as evidence in disciplinary action and only viewed by authorized school personnel. Security Cameras

## **23. Severe Weather**

In case of severe weather (snow, low temperatures, ice), the official announcement for school closings may be heard on local radio and television stations. Listen to these and **DO NOT** call the school. Listen for **Gahanna Schools** or **Gahanna-Jefferson Schools**.

## **24. Student Records**

Please report any changes in address, phone number, and other vital information to the school office as soon as it is known. We can then maintain current information in our files. Families who plan to move to some other address, either within the district or to another town, should likewise inform the school as soon as possible. The necessary withdrawal forms can be prepared for the parents' signature. Remember, we cannot release a student's personal records without a parent signature.

## **25. Team Sports**

**Team sports** are provided for both girls and boys in the 7th and 8th grades. The sports for girls include the following: volleyball, tennis, golf, and cross-country in the fall, basketball in the winter, and track and softball in the spring. The sports for boys include the following: football, golf, and cross-country in the fall, basketball and wrestling in the winter, and track and tennis in the spring. **A physical examination is required of all athletic participants. This physical is good for one calendar year.**

## **26. Telephones**

Authorized use of school telephones is limited to emergency situations, before and after school, and during lunch periods with permission. Students are **NOT** to tie up the phone with extended conversations. Students who violate the phone rules may lose their rights to use the phone. **Students who are ill or need lunch money may use the office phone.**

## **27. Textbooks**

Textbooks are issued to each student in the subject areas. If the book is lost or defaced in any manner, the student is responsible for making payment according to a set schedule.

## **28. Visitors**

Visitors must report to the office upon arrival to sign in and receive a name badge. Students are not permitted to bring friends to school.

## **29. PBIS:Summary of Board Policy**

### 5630.01- POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS AND LIMITED USE OF RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

The Board is committed to the District-wide use of PBIS with students. Student Personnel shall work to prevent the need for the use of restraint and/or seclusion.

Professional staff members and support staff determined appropriate by the Superintendent are permitted to physically restrain and/or seclude a student in limited circumstances as set forth in this Policy.

All restraint and seclusion shall only be done in accordance with this Policy, which is based on the standards adopted by the State Board of Education regarding the use of student restraint and seclusion, and consistent with the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE's) Policy on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, and Restraint and seclusion (adopted January 15, 2013). The Superintendent shall develop emergency procedures for the District.

Physical restraint and seclusion shall be implemented only by Student Personnel who have been trained in accordance with this Policy to protect the care, welfare, dignity and safety of the student, except in the case of rare and unavoidable emergency situations when trained personnel are not immediately available.

Notwithstanding the requirements of this Policy and ODE's corresponding standards and policy, school personnel may use reasonable force and restraint in accordance with R.C. 3319.41. Persons employed or engaged as teachers, principals, or administrators, nonlicensed school employees and school bus drivers may, within their scope of their employment, use and apply such amount of force and restraint as is reasonable and necessary to quell a disturbance threatening physical injury to others, to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects upon the person or within the control of the pupil, for the purpose of self-defense, or for the protection of persons or property.

Seclusion of a preschool-age student is prohibited, except that a preschool-age child may be separated from his or her classmates, either in the classroom or in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space, for an amount of time that is brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and development, if the child is always within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member. The following practices are prohibited under all circumstances, including emergency safety situations:

- a. corporal punishment;
- b. child endangerment as defined in Ohio Revised Code 2919.22;
- c. aversive behavioral interventions.

### **30. Annual Medicaid Notification**

The Gahanna-Jefferson Public School District is eligible to receive federal Medicaid reimbursement for medically necessary services provided to their special education students when the services meet the requirements of the state's School-Based Medicaid Program and are provided in accordance with the students' IEPs (§300.154(d)(2)(i)-(iii)).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) require schools to notify parents that the district participates in this program. The district utilizes services ordered in the IEP and the Medicaid identification number, in conjunction with the state Medicaid Agency and our Medicaid billing agent, to receive reimbursements for these services from the School-Based Medicaid Program.

The district's participation in this program in no way impacts the services being provided to the student nor impacts the family's Medicaid benefits. In the event parents no longer want the district to access student information for the purposes of seeking reimbursements through this program, they can notify the district Special Education department by calling 614-337-3777. This annual notification is being provided to you in accordance with program requirements.

## Health & Wellness

GJPS Wellness Committee meets at least four times a year to collaborate with parents, teachers, school administrators, students, school health professionals, and community members to further our culture of wellness. The WC is dedicated to improving the health of students through increasing physical activity and nutrition education. The Committee welcomes new members and publishes a newsletter periodically. Please see the Family Wellness area on the GJPS website under Child Nutrition for wellness resources and contact information.

### Physical Education

A comprehensive physical education program is provided for students in K-12 with the academic content standards adopted by the State. The PE curriculum provides students with opportunities to learn and practice skills necessary to engage in lifelong, health-enhancing physical activity.

### Nutrition

School Meals – the Food Service/Child Nutrition program will provide all students affordable access to varied and nutritious food based on the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans, USDA meal patterns, and Smart Snacks in Schools. Students are discouraged from sharing food with one another during meal times due to allergies, and other dietary restrictions.

### Nutrition Education & Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influences lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques, nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs.

### Classroom Celebrations

We know that birthdays and holidays are important to every child and that kids like to celebrate with their classmates. However, sending in a food treat to the classroom to celebrate can exclude those children who have food allergies, diabetes or other dietary restrictions.

Suggested alternatives to food treats for birthday and holiday parties at school are:

- Party favors – erasers, pencils, stickers, bracelets, key chains, slinkies, etc.
- Parent or guest can visit the classroom and read a book to the students! (Elementary)
- Purchase something for the classroom – book, game, plant, craft, etc.
- Bring in something the students can sign – a t-shirt, tote bag, autograph book

Healthy Snacks: Yogurt/yogurt parfaits, cheese, fruit or veggie cups/kabobs, bottled water, 100% fruit or vegetable juice; no nut snacks or peanut butter please! We encourage parents to bring treats that follow the Smart Snacks In Schools standards. See list on website for additional information.

### Fundraising

Activity-based fundraisers are wonderful such as field days, walk/run/bike/dance a thons, jump rope or hula hoop competitions. Other non-food fundraisers that work well are talent shows, yard sales, festivals, singing telegrams, and art shows.

Only foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold on school grounds during the school day (midnight until 30 minutes after the instructional day). See the GJPS Child Nutrition website area for Smart Snack info.