



2025-26 FAMILY HANDBOOK

GRADES K-12

GESTALT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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Memphis, TN 38118

901-213-5161

www.gestaltcs.org

A Message from the CEO



Dear Parent Partner,

It is my honor and privilege to serve as the CEO of Gestalt Community Schools, the home of Power Center Academy. Our five schools serve more than 2,700 families, and we have proudly graduated more than 1,200 scholars with seven consecutive years of 100% college acceptance.

We don't take your selection of Power Center Academy for granted. Our families have many choices, and we are honored that you chose our schools. In turn for your confidence in us, we promise the following commitments to your family:

- Ensure that every scholar is (KLE) Known, Loved and Educated.
- Provide a high-quality educational experience.
- Offer frequent communication on your child's academic progress.
- Tailor instruction based on your child's needs.
- Integrate community resources and partnerships to improve our schools and community.
- Prepare your child to be college, community and career-ready.
- Treat your child as if he or she were our own.

In addition to our commitments, we want to build and strengthen a collaborative atmosphere that is dedicated to working in the best interest of our scholars. It takes more than our teachers, school leaders and staff to accomplish this - we need you as a partner. Your partnership is vital to a successful school year. We are better together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Yetta Lewis". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Yetta Lewis
Chief Executive Officer

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Gestalt Community Schools Overview

Gestalt Community Schools (GCS) is a system of K-12 college-preparatory charter schools in targeted Tennessee communities. GCS schools provide strong academic outcomes for our scholars through initiatives that include meaningful community involvement. GCS catalyzes community leadership to help revitalize the neighborhood as we operate our schools in the community. Instead of debating whether education impacts the community or vice versa, GCS believes that the most effective method to support student achievement is through an integration of education and community – a true "gestalt."

Mission

Gestalt Community Schools (GCS) is a charter management organization that serves K-12 scholars. GCS leverages community assets to empower individuals who will be college-ready, career-ready and community-ready.

Vision

Building better communities through education.



LOVE RADICALLY: Gestalt is not school as usual. Here, you are part of a community that builds relationships like family. At Gestalt, we want scholars, families and staff to be Known and Loved – for your strengths and weaknesses; your passions; your past, present and envisioned future. Only then can we educate you. Radical love means we make personal sacrifices to know, support and nurture one another.



INVEST DEEPLY

INVEST DEEPLY: The social, economic and racial challenges our community faces require an unwavering vision of excellence. All of us need someone in our corner who is relentless in their commitment to developing our greatness. We will invest deeply in you through education, mentoring, coaching and committing fiercely to growth. In turn, we ask you to invest in yourself, in others and in your community.



ADVOCATE BOLDLY

ADVOCATE BOLDLY: Your ideas matter, and you have the right to be heard. We'll educate you so you feel confident using your voice to speak up articulately and passionately in any setting, to anyone. Advocating boldly is the result of an education that trains your mind and heart, rooting passionate opinions in well-reasoned facts; balanced views of any issue; and the ability to listen. We believe the act of speaking out is liberating in itself.



ACT PURPOSEFULLY

ACT PURPOSEFULLY: Each of us has a moral obligation to leave our community better than we found it. Our schools offer authentic experiences for you to participate in community service, social entrepreneurship and community development. Collectively, our efforts transform under-resourced spaces into community hubs with effective schools at the center. We believe that every person can find hope and a life of lasting meaning through purposeful action.

Our Schools

| School Name | School Contact Information |
|--|--|
| <p>Power Center Academy Elementary School: Hickory Hill</p> <p>Grades: K-5</p> <p>Haley McNabb: Principal hmcnabb@powercenteracademy.org</p> | <p>3540 S. Mendenhall Rd Memphis, TN 38115</p> <p>901-310-2999</p> <p>School Office Email: pcaeshh@powercenteracademy.org</p> |
| <p>Power Center Academy Elementary School: Southeast</p> <p>Grades: K-5</p> <p>Krystal McGowen-Earley: Principal kmcgowen@powercenteracademy.org</p> | <p>7051 Malco Crossing Memphis, TN 38125</p> <p>901-352-6226</p> <p>School Office Email: pcase@powercenteracademy.org</p> |
| <p>Power Center Academy Middle School: Southeast</p> <p>Grades: 6-8</p> <p>Kodey Harper: Principal kharper@powercenteracademy.org</p> | <p>7051 Malco Crossing Memphis, TN 38125</p> <p>901-352-6226</p> <p>School Office Email: pcase@powercenteracademy.org</p> |
| <p>Power Center Academy Middle School: Hickory Hill</p> <p>Grades: 6-8</p> <p>Shereka Wright: Principal swright@powercenteracademy.org</p> | <p>5449 Winchester Road Memphis, TN 38115</p> <p>901-333-6874</p> <p>School Office Email: pcamshh@powercenteracademy.org</p> |
| <p>Power Center Academy High School: Hickory Hill</p> <p>Grades: 9-12</p> <p>Dr. Crystal Travis: Principal ctravis@powercenteracademy.org</p> | <p>Ninth Grade Academy 5353 S. Mendenhall Mall Memphis, TN 38115</p> <p>Grades 10-12 Building 5390 S. Mendenhall Mall Memphis, TN 38115</p> <p>901-310-1331</p> <p>School Office Email: pcahshh@powercenteracademy.org</p> |

The Power House Pledge

This is our house, the Power House.
In our house, we power up our minds with knowledge.
We power up each other with encouragement.
We power up our community by giving back.



PCA is a Power House!

Where we learn to think globally and act locally.

School Colors

Our school colors are navy blue, white and gray.

Mascots

| Squires (Grades K-5) | Knights (Grades 6-12) |
|---|---|
|  A cartoon illustration of a squire in blue and white armor. The squire has a plumed helmet, a sword in his right hand, and a shield on his left arm. He is standing on a blue shield-shaped base. |  A cartoon illustration of a knight in blue and white armor. The knight has a plumed helmet, a sword raised in his right hand, and a shield on his chest. The shield features a circular atom symbol, a chalice, the letters 'PCA' in a circle, and an open book. He is standing on a blue shield-shaped base. |

Code of Honor

The GCS Code of Honor must be upheld and signed by each scholar. The code focuses on respect and personal accountability.

As a GCS scholar, I pledge the following:

- I will ensure that the work I submit is my own.
- I will not provide unauthorized academic assistance to another scholar.
- I will always respect my property and the property of others.
- I will only use the Internet and other reference materials as resources, and I will not duplicate and submit those resources as my own.
- I will return any items that I find to the owner or to a school staff member.

A GCS scholar never cheats, steals, or disrespects others. This code governs GCS scholars at all schools.

School Schedules

| Schools | Breakfast | School Start | Dismissal | After-School Tutoring |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| PCA Elementary: Hickory Hill | 7:45 a.m. | 8:00 a.m. | 3:30 p.m. | 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. |
| PCA Elementary: Southeast | 7:45 a.m. | 8:00 a.m. | 3:30 p.m. | 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. |
| PCA Middle: Hickory Hill | 7:30 a.m. | 7:45 a.m. | 3:15 p.m. | 3:15 – 4:15 p.m. |
| PCA Middle: Southeast | 7:30 a.m. | 7:45 a.m. | 3:15 p.m. | 3:15 – 4:15 p.m. |
| PCA High: Hickory Hill | 7:00 a.m. | 7:15 a.m. | 2:45 p.m. | 2:45 – 3:45 p.m. |

Parents, please do not arrive too early. We are prepared to accept parents five minutes before arrival and dismissal. If you arrive early, we will ask you to do one of the following:

- Loop back around the traffic circle.
- Leave the traffic circle and park your vehicle.
- Return at the designated pick-up time.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival and dismissal are critical to the school day starting and ending well. The safety of our scholars is most important.

Each school will provide parents their arrival and dismissal procedures. Each school will also establish a time for early dismissals to end.

Please remember that scholars are not allowed to be on campus unattended.

Scholars continuously left at the school after dismissal or being dropped off at school prior to the school's entry time will result in disciplinary actions up to and including the Department of Children Services being contacted. Additionally, a fee will be incurred for scholars left after dismissal times.

Please contact our before and aftercare provider if you need an earlier arrival or a later pick-up time.

There are five basic ways scholars arrive and dismiss from school:

Car riders:

Your scholar's school will provide you directions for how, where and what time car riders will be picked up. They will also provide a traffic pattern diagram that outlines the traffic flow.

If you arrive early for arrival or dismissal at the school, we will ask you to do one of the following:

- Wait in the traffic circle for your arrival/dismissal time.
- Loop back around the traffic circle.
- Return at the designated arrival/dismissal time.
- For arrival, do not leave scholars until school staff opens the building to receive scholars.

Walkers and sibling pick-up:

Scholars who are designated as walkers are asked to leave the school campus and not to return once they are dismissed. Repeated violations of this process will result in disciplinary actions. Gestalt Community Schools requires at least one sibling to be 10 years old or older when walking younger siblings.

Parents are asked to review traffic and walking safety guidelines with scholars prior to allowing them to walk to and from school.

High school drivers:

There will be a designated parking area for high school drivers. All drivers must obtain a parking pass from the main office to park on the school lot. Vehicles in the scholar parking area without a pass are at risk of being towed. High school drivers picking up siblings should follow the car rider traffic pattern for their siblings' school.

Daycare bus:

Parents must notify the school if their scholar will be utilizing a daycare bus company for arrival and/or dismissal. An alternate arrival/dismissal traffic pattern may be set up for daycare buses. Daycare buses must follow the arrival/dismissal times and patterns set forth by the school.

School bus transportation:

We have limited availability for bus riders. Seats are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. An application must be completed and approved for bus transportation prior to scholars riding the bus. Please allow 72 hours for application approval/denial. Bus transportation is a privilege and scholars may be removed from the bus for behavioral, safety and arrival/dismissal infractions.

Gestalt Community Schools uses public parking lots for bus stops. Parents must follow the guidelines below:

- In the morning, parents must wait with the scholars until the bus arrives.
- In the afternoon, parents must be at the bus stop when the bus arrives.
- For scholars under 10 years old, please come to the bus door to pick them up.
- Scholars will be returned to the school for parent pick-up if no one is at the afternoon stop and a fee will be assessed. Repeated school returns will result in dismissal of the scholar from bus transportation.
- Bus riders may walk home from the bus stop. Parents must notify school if their scholar will walk home from the bus stop.
- No one should stop the bus while en route to pick up or dismiss a scholar.

Bus behavior and safety:

- Scholars are subject to the Code of Conduct and Progressive Accountability while riding the bus and at bus stops.
- Scholars shall cooperate with the driver and are expected to be respectful and not use obscene and/or abusive language.
- Scholars shall not participate in excessive talking and unnecessary noise.
- Scholars shall not fight or wrestle on the bus or at the bus stop.
- Scholars shall not deliberately delay loading and unloading.
- Scholars shall stay seated and not turn around in the seat.
- Scholars shall not use tobacco and/or drugs on the bus or at the bus stop.
- Scholars shall not tamper with equipment or deliberately vandalize the bus.
- Scholars shall not consume food or drink on the bus.
- Scholars shall not attempt to get on or off the bus until it has come to a complete stop.

Before and Aftercare (K-8 Only)

Before and aftercare programs will be operated by a third-party vendor. Parents and scholars are subject to the PCA guidelines, as well as the third-party vendor's guidelines for conduct and payments. An application must be completed and approved to participate in the before/aftercare program. Before and aftercare is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Our before care program will operate from 6 a.m. until the start of school, and aftercare will operate from the end of the school day until 6 p.m.

Scholars who are not members of the before or aftercare program must follow the school arrival/dismissal times. There will be a fee assessed by the school should scholars remain at school after the last dismissal time.

Meal Services and Deliveries

Gestalt Community Schools provides breakfast and lunch services daily for all scholars free of charge. Scholars may bring their own breakfast and/or lunch to be consumed during their assigned lunch time. Please note that microwaves are provided at our high school only.

Delivery guidelines:

- No commercial meal deliveries for scholars (DoorDash, UberEats, etc.) will be accepted by school staff or scholars.
- Only parents/guardians may bring their scholar lunch.
- All lunches must be in a bag or container labeled on the outside with the scholar's first and last name and grade.
- Deliver to the front desk no more than 30 minutes before your scholar's assigned lunch time, and the front desk will hold until your scholar's lunch time.
- Deliveries not meeting these guidelines will be refused.

GCS will not be responsible for any fees associated with meal deliveries.

Inclement Weather (Emergencies, Delays and Closures)

Gestalt Community Schools follows the Memphis-Shelby County Schools inclement weather directions. Guardians may receive notifications via the following outlets:

- Local news on TV or radio.
- Communication via our parent alert system with phone calls, text messages and emails.
- School social media pages.

Whenever school is canceled or released early due to inclement weather, all after-school activities will be canceled, as well. **If a school closes early, aftercare scholars and bus riders are requested to be picked up at the school at the dismissal time (buses will not run when all schools close early).**

The decision to delay, close or release early due to inclement weather will apply to all GCS schools. Guardians should review the Gestalt messages to make certain they have the correct instructions and pick-up times.

Guardians always have the choice to keep their scholars at home, pick them up early or send them late – even when the decision has been made to remain open. Guardians are the ultimate decision makers when it comes to their scholars! Please note that attendance policies will still apply in situations where parents make an attendance decision that does not align with the network decision around school openings and closures.

Attendance Policy

Research provides evidence that scholars with good attendance also perform well in school. Regular attendance also includes punctuality (tardiness). Scholars should be present and prepared for learning each day. The Tennessee State Compulsory Attendance Law (T.C.A. §49-6-3001 and T.C.A. §49-6-2007) requires that pupils of legal age attend school (ages of six and 17 years, both inclusive) – unless special circumstances arise which temporarily or permanently excuse the scholar from attendance. This also applies to five-year-old scholars who have attended school for six weeks. By state law, the scholar's school year shall consist of a minimum of 180 instructional days exclusive of all vacations, as approved by the GCS Board of Education (T.C.A. §49-6-3004). The annual calendar is divided into two semesters.

Documentation from Parent

A written notice (including scholar's name, date and parent signature) explaining the absence is required when a scholar returns to school. A written statement within two school days of the scholar's return to school shall be required from the parent or guardian explaining the reason for *each* absence. A doctor's notice or court notices are required for three or more consecutive days of absences from school. If necessary, verification is required from an official source to justify absences. All absences other than those outlined above shall be considered unexcused.

Reason for Excused Absences

- Personal illness of the scholar: A parent conference will be required to justify excused absences after the accumulation of 10 days of absences during a school year and is considered truant. The attendance policy will be followed accordingly.
- Hospitalization of the scholar: A required physician verification may be needed to justify absences after the accumulation of 10 days.
- Death or serious illness in the immediate family.
- Recognized religious holidays.
- Subpoena for court appearance.
- Approved school sponsored activities.
- Extenuating circumstances for which the scholar has no control, as approved by the principal.
- One-day absence when the parent/guardian or custodian is deployed for military service and one-day absence when the parent/guardian or custodian returns from military service.

Early Withdrawal and Late Arrivals

Scholars are required by law to meet a specified number of minutes per day in order to be counted as present. Therefore, scholars must be present 80% of the school day. Scholars withdrawn from school two hours before the designated dismissal time will count as an unexcused absence for the day. Scholars who arrive two hours late (missed the first two class periods of the day) will count as an unexcused absence. For Fridays, scholars must be present the entire day to be counted as present for the day.

Attendance Response

Gestalt Community Schools is a network committed to supporting families on their educational journey. Part of that commitment involves frequent meetings, phone calls, and emails to check on the needs of our families. This is especially true regarding compulsory attendance for scholars between the ages of 5-18. We work to mitigate barriers that could prevent scholars from attending school each day. A Family Liaison employee will meet with a family to determine a plan if attendance becomes a challenge. Failure to uphold the policy or plan will result in the following actions:

| Category | Count | Response |
|--|---------------|--|
| <p>Absences</p> <p>Scholar missing an entire school day or a class period for any reason. Early dismissal is considered absence from the instructional classroom period.</p> <p>Our target is always a 95% attendance rate. That means a scholar can only miss nine or less days within the school year.</p> | 1 | A PowerSchool report is generated and unsuccessfully delivered calls will be made by the school secretary. |
| | 2 consecutive | A phone call reminder is made by the school secretary responsible for attendance and is documented in PowerSchool. |
| <p>Tardy and Early Dismissals</p> <p>Arriving after the required morning meeting, homeroom or for any class period constitutes a tardy. Early dismissal is considered absence from the instructional classroom period.</p> | 4 | A typewritten warning notice is delivered to the parent at dismissal and emailed via PowerSchool Messenger. |
| | 5 + | One hour of after-school reflections over a three-day period are required. Notification is sent through PowerSchool Messenger. |
| | 10 + | A two-hour Saturday School reflection is mandatory, and the parent or guardian is required to attend a Parent Academy session on attendance support. The sessions are held weekly at the Performance Arts Center (the PAC). |
| <p>Truancy</p> <p>Five or more unexcused absences.</p> <p>Our target is less than 10% of our school population truant.</p> | 2 + | Two+ unexcused absences will result in an immediate in-person parent conference . During the meeting, the parents will discuss the reasons for the absences and submit documentation to the school office. |
| | 4 | Four unexcused absences result in the scholar attending one-hour after-school reflections for a three-day period . Parents are required to attend a meeting with the Family Engagement Liaison to develop a family attendance plan. |
| | 5 + | Five or more unexcused absences will result in scholars attending a two-hour Saturday School . Scholar athletes are removed from the team until attendance has improved. Parents are required to attend a Saturday Parent Academy to review and revise the family attendance plan. The sessions are held weekly at the Performance Arts Center (the PAC). |
| | 8+ | Eight+ unexcused absences will result in a three-hour Saturday School and removal from all extracurricular activities, including athletics, clubs and field trips . Parents are required to attend a Saturday Parent Academy to review and revise the family attendance plan. The sessions are held weekly at the Performance Arts Center (the PAC). |

| | | |
|--|-------------|---|
| | 10+ | Ten unexcused absences will result in the scholar being dropped from school enrollment after missing ten consecutive days. After ten cumulative, unexcused absences, a report is sent to Juvenile Court and summons is sent to the parents to appear in court . |
| <p>Chronic Absenteeism</p> <p>Missing at least 10% of days in a school year for any reasons including excused and unexcused absences.</p> <p>Our target is less than 10% of our student population chronically absent.</p> | 5%+ | 5% + Chronic absenteeism will result in a two-hour Saturday School session for scholars and a required parent meeting to develop a family attendance plan. |
| | 8%+ | 8%+ Chronic absenteeism will result in scholars attending a three-hour Saturday School and parents attending Saturday Parent Academy to review our attendance policy and craft a family attendance plan. |
| | 10%+ | 10% + Chronic absenteeism will result in scholars attending a four-hour Saturday School and parents attending Saturday Parent Academy to review our attendance policy and craft a family attendance plan. The scholar is removed from all extracurricular activities including athletics, clubs and field trips. |
| | 25%+ | 25% + Chronic absenteeism will result in retention to current grade level. |

Failure to comply will result in an overnight suspension and a mandatory in-person parent meeting the next school day.

Homebound and Hospitalized Scholars

- Scholars with an illness, injury or pregnancy that is expected to cause the scholars to be absent for more than two consecutive weeks should be placed on homebound status and provided homebound services.
- Homebound scholars shall receive at least three hours of direct instruction in a home or hospital setting per week.
- Homebound scholars receiving special education services shall receive direct instruction based on the number of hours determined by the scholar's IEP.
- An IEP team may return a scholar who is homebound or hospitalized to the regular classroom setting on a gradual basis.
- The scholar should be marked as homebound until that scholar is in the regular classroom for at least 50% of the scheduled school day, at which time the homebound scholar is removed from the homebound/hospitalized census.
- At the beginning of the homebound period, the appropriate staff shall enter the start date and the estimated date of return. When the scholar returns, the estimated date of return shall be changed to the actual date.
- Homebound scholars shall not be dropped and reentered but shall remain enrolled and be counted present and coded "HB" in the student management system.
- Homebound/hospitalized scholars are to be included in the regular grade level count.
- Scholars with disabilities who are placed on homebound should also be included in the Option 10 (TN Pulse) count using a date range identifying the homebound period.

Appointments

Parents, please work with the school to schedule all doctor's appointments after school, on the weekends or during holiday breaks. If you have to schedule an appointment during the school day, the lunch and enrichment periods are ideal. Scholars can return to school after appointments with a doctor's note.

Make-Up Work Policy

Scholars are able to make up work when absent from class. The teacher will provide make-up work upon the scholar's return. Make-up work must be turned in within three days of return to school. This includes students who were suspended from school. Suspended scholars should submit all teacher assignments and electronic web assignments upon returning to school. It is each scholar's responsibility to complete and turn in his or her missed assignments.

Scholar Withdrawal from School Policy

The school principal and office staff prefer a 24-hour notification via email or phone by a legal parent or guardian prior to withdrawal procedures. Scholars can only withdraw through the main office. Scholars must return all textbooks and computers, as well as pay any remaining fees to the school prior to withdrawing, or school records will be held until payment is received. Parents are required to submit the name and address of the transferring school and complete an exit interview at the time of notification. Withdrawal paperwork can be picked up daily between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Community Service Program

Our goal is to leave our community better than we found it. Our scholars and families are required to commit to the following community service hours.

All schools will have one school-based community service event every quarter.

| Grade level | Total hours required each year |
|-------------------|---|
| Elementary school | Attend at least two school-sponsored group community service events per year. |
| Middle school | 10 hours per year |
| High school | 10 hours per year |
| Families | 5 hours per year |

Individual scholar community service hours are logged into PowerSchool. Community service documentation forms must be submitted to the main office. In addition, scholars are required to complete service-learning projects prior to graduation. Scholars will receive opportunities to engage in community service via clubs, organizations and individual initiatives. Family community service hours can be served during school hours (teacher helper, homeroom activities, school and network community projects, traffic guards, chaperons etc.) or after school hours (tutoring, athletic events, program etc.). Ask your school staff how you may be of service.

Uniform Policy

Uniforms must be purchased from our approved, official uniform vendor – [Champion Promotions](#). Champion Promotions is located at 3649 Winplace Rd. Memphis, TN 38118. *Please note: If an alternative is needed for our required uniform, parents must send an email request to the school principal for review and approval.*

Monday through Friday uniforms



- 6-12 navy blazer
- K-5 navy cardigan
- K-12 white Oxford shirt
- K-12 tie or crosstie
- 6-12 grey pants or skirt
- K-5 grey pants
- K-2 plaid jumper or 3-4 plaid skirt
- Senior collegiate sweater
- White, black or navy socks
- Closed toe shoes in black or white
- **We are allowing all-white or all-black athletic shoes.**
- Please **no** sandals, multi-color athletic, athletic flip-flops, crocs, house slippers, sweatshirts, jackets or hats.

Friday only uniform



- PCA sweatshirts can be worn.
- K-5 blue or white polo shirt
- 6-12 white polo shirt
- 6-12 grey pants or skirt
- K-5 grey pants
- K-2 plaid jumper or 3-5 plaid skirt
- White, black or navy socks
- Closed toe shoes in black or white
- **We are allowing all-white or all-black athletic shoes.**
- Please **no** sandals, multi-color athletic, athletic flip-flops, crocs, house slippers, sweatshirts, jackets or hats.
- Optional: blazer and cardigan

Physical education uniforms (grades 6-10)



- Logoed t-shirt
- Logoed sweatpants
- Logoed sweatshirt is optional.

The school will provide you with the exact time of the year and grading period in which physical education is required for your scholar. The uniform is required for both safety and comfort.

Twelfth grade senior cardigans ONLY

PAT'S
MONOGRAMS
EMBROIDERY
ENGRAVING



IT'S TIME TO PURCHASE YOUR SENIOR'S CARDIGAN!

In order to receive the cardigan by the start of next school year, you must order by July 8, 2024.

This senior cardigan is a special rite of passage for our twelfth graders, as such this cardigan or any style similar should not be purchased or worn by any other grade level.

Transfer Policy

Gestalt Community Schools shall offer student transfers that provide options for parents/legal guardians/custodians to enhance the educational environment and overall school community at individual schools.

The feasibility of allowing transfers into schools within the network, at a minimum, shall consider the educational capacity of the school including space allocation for specialty programs, staffing, general program offerings and crowding/overcrowding. Gestalt Community Schools shall also review transfer trends to prevent unintended effects such as inequities, disparities and instability/underutilization in certain schools or attendance zones.

The school system shall consider student transfers according to the provisions outlined below:

Mid-Year Transfers

Most schools see a natural attrition of scholars throughout each school year. Families see changes in their living situations for various reasons, and for that, Gestalt Community Schools allows new and current scholar families to apply for those openings as they arise.

Scholars inside and outside of the Gestalt network shall complete an online application for his or her desired school to then be placed on a waitlist for new openings. Each opening is presented to families on a first come, first serve basis dependent upon a scholar's waitlisted number.

Current network scholars will work with the Office of Enrollment to complete the internal transfer process, which includes a mandatory exit interview between the scholar's guardian and current school's leader or administrator prior to the completion of the transfer. Scholar families have 24 hours to schedule an exit interview from the transfer offer.

External scholars will be contacted by the school office with an offer for the enrollment opening. Families have 24 hours to complete the online registration forms to confirm their intent to enroll and have 48 hours to bring in required documents to the school campus.

Priority Transfers

Gestalt Community Schools may expedite scholar transfers if required by law or determined necessary by the school system (e.g., special education services, safety, adjustment, psychological or medical needs of a scholar).

Open Enrollment

The open enrollment period for all Gestalt Community Schools is November 13 through December 31. During this period, all current Gestalt scholars have the opportunity to apply for any school within the network for the next school year with priority of admission. Scholars will remain enrolled at his or her current PCA school until the completion of the current school year and transfer to the new school upon the start of our next school year. Scholars applying after the January 3–31 open enrollment dates are given a waitlist number, which allows scholars to enroll at his or her desired school on a first come, first serve basis alongside scholars currently outside of the Gestalt network.

Parents as Partners

GCS firmly believes that “It takes a Village to raise a child,” and without cooperation and communication between a school and their parent community, we cannot fully support our children and their learning.

Parental Volunteer Policy

All GCS parents are requested to commit to at least five hours of volunteer service to the school within one school year. Volunteer hours will be logged in PowerSchool and awards will be given to the most active parents at the end of the school year.

Family Conferences and Data Meetings

Parents are **required** to attend all family conferences and data meetings. If a parent is not available to attend the sessions, they must send a representative to attend the meeting. The representative must be an adult over the age of 21. In some cases, the school principal may provide make-up sessions (in-person or virtual) for parents. This is at the discretion of the principal.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

As a parent of a PCA scholar, you are a member of the PAC, which stands for Parent Advisory Council. The PAC is a way to voice your concerns to school leadership, by means of your school PAC Leaders. The PAC Leaders will host monthly meetings in-person and/or virtual. Parent representatives will co-chair schoolwide activities with a school staff member.

NICE Team (Network Inclusion, Culture and Equity)

Gestalt Community Schools believes that a strong Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program is the cornerstone to our academic approach and scholars’ academic success.

Social emotional learning is crucial, especially post-pandemic, as this type of teaching allows scholars to apply knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and make responsible decisions. More importantly, SEL advances educational equity.

This is why Gestalt formed The Network Inclusion, Culture and Equity (NICE) Team, which has been tasked with codifying our current body of SEL work and planning authentic experiences that allow scholars, families and teachers to practice those skills through a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) lens.

NICE Team liaisons

Each school has a faculty member who will be the liaison responsible for all NICE Team communication while functioning as the point person/liaison at their school location.

Family Engagement Liaisons

Each school will have at least one Family Engagement Liaison who will provide support to families to mitigate barriers to educational success.

Graduate Aims

We operate with a working hypothesis that, in order to yield human flourishing, our Grad Aims will span the following domains:

Personal Historian

Gestalt scholars will know who they are and where they are going. Successful completion of this project-based learning unit will result in a scholar's ability to tell their family story in a manner that will increase self-worth and a sense of belonging in their community. Scholars will also conduct research into their historical place of origin. Scholars will complete a different version of this project each school year.

Courageous Explorer

Gestalt scholars seek to solve the biggest problems and knock down walls to do it. Successful completion of this project-based learning unit will motivate scholars to take part in authentic experiences that help to deepen first their own cultural competency and then begin to explore and better understand other cultures. Scholars will participate in classroom lessons along with a curated experience to support this learning each year.

Community Contributor

Gestalt scholars nurture a passion for helping others and leave their community greater than they found it. These experiences will result in opportunities that allow scholars to contribute to their community in profound and impactful ways.

Family Academy

These events will provide participants with self-care activities and strategies to help with reducing stress; promoting well-being; and improving community connections within the Gestalt family. Our intention is to provide you and your loved ones, whether it be parents, scholars, teachers or administrators, with self-care strategies that can work for you in the classroom, the home or the workplace.

Financial literacy

Our partners at Trustmark Bank provide information and support for families who would like to learn more about budgeting, homebuying, credit recovery and other financial needs.

Adult English language lessons

Gestalt Community Schools has partnered with a local education nonprofit, HopeWorks, to offer classes free of charge for adults who need support in learning the English language.

Well-being sessions

The NICE Team offers a variety of experiences and activities for parents, teachers, scholars and community members. These events are designed to promote well-being and self-care for members of the Gestalt community. Scan the QR code to follow the NICE Team on Eventbrite to register for events.



Scholar Support

School counselors

A Gestalt Community Schools counselor is a licensed and experienced practitioner who serves to support the social, emotional and academic development of our scholars, ensuring their long-term personal success. Services offered include individual counseling, group counseling, academic counseling and SEL awareness events.

Social workers

Gestalt Community Schools social workers are licensed professionals who collaborate with scholars, families, teachers and administrators to promote academic achievement and overall well-being. They offer counseling and support services to address social, emotional and behavioral challenges that may affect a scholar's ability to succeed in school. Additionally, they work to connect families with community resources and advocate for scholars' needs within the school system. School social workers play a crucial role in fostering a positive and inclusive school environment where scholars feel supported and empowered to reach their full potential.

Nurses

A Gestalt Community Schools nurse is a professional licensed nurse by the Tennessee Board of Nursing. School nurses manage the school health services in collaboration with their supervising personnel and the school leader.

Parent resource guide

Available by request from the school counselor.

Parent Grievance

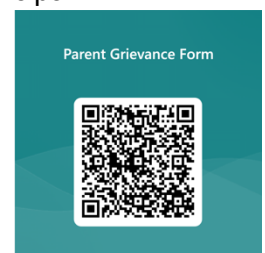
Gestalt Community Schools' board of directors has the following Grievance Policy as a guide for parents and guardians to solve possible grievance issues in the most effective manner. This policy serves as a guideline, while the Gestalt board of directors has the final decision in all matters that take place under the direction of its schools. The following procedure will be followed whenever a parent/guardian has a particular grievance:

STEP 1: The parent/guardian is to set an appointment to meet with the teacher or staff member involved in the grievance. The teacher and/or the parent/guardian may request that the principal or his/her designee be present.

STEP 2: If the issue is not resolved, the parent/guardian may ask for a meeting with the principal.

STEP 3: If the issue is not resolved at the principal level, the parent/guardian may contact Lori McGee by completing the grievance form by scanning this QR code. A formal grievance will be recorded and followed up to include the principal and parties involved, along with an update from leadership on next steps.

STEP 4: If the issue remains unresolved, the parent/guardian is requested to write a formal letter or email to the Chief of Schools, Docia Generette-Walker, for a final decision. The letter or email should be emailed (info@gestaltcs.org), faxed (901-432-5443) or mailed (2650 Thousand Oaks Blvd Ste 2200 Memphis, TN 38118).



Computer and Tablet Policy

Gestalt Community Schools has a One-to-One Laptop/Tablet program. All scholars will be assigned technology by their homeroom teacher. This technology is to be returned at the end of the school day to the classroom charging cart for overnight charging. If devices are not returned by scholars to the cart daily, it will be determined lost and fees will be assessed.

- Laptop/tablet should ALWAYS be carried in a case.
- Laptop/tablet should never be thrown, kicked, carried, handled or stood on in an inappropriate manner. Handle with care! Scholars are responsible for ANY and ALL damages.
- DESKTOP AND INTERNET HOMEPAGE default settings should NOT be changed for ANY reason.
- Audio or video recordings should never be taken WITHOUT your teacher's permission.
- Photos should not be taken WITHOUT your teacher's permission.
- Never allow another scholar to use your computer. You are responsible for your laptop/tablet.
- ALWAYS remain on the website provided by your teacher.
- Music, DVDs or drives are NOT allowed unless directed by your teacher.
- Headphones are NOT allowed unless given permission by your teacher.
- DO NOT download or import any music or files WITHOUT your teacher's permission. This also includes importing music or files from a flash drive.
- DO NOT download ANY images or files to the desktop without your teacher's permission. All photos used for educational purposes should be saved on the computer.
- Stickers or highlighter/marker drawings should not be on a scholar's device at any time.

Laptop and Tablet Warranty Information

Gestalt Community Schools (GCS) recognizes that with the implementation of the One-to-One Laptop/Tablet initiative, there is a need to protect the investment by both the school and the scholar/parent. Gestalt Community Schools offers a device warranty program. Participation is required, and failure to participate may result in charges for repairs and potential replacement of the device.

The annual insurance premium is assessed per scholar at the cost outlined below:

| SCHOLAR TECHNOLOGY USAGE FEE | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Elementary scholars | \$35 |
| Middle/high scholars | \$50 |
| Excessive damage fee (iPad) | \$879 |

GCS – Grading Policy

Grades reported at the end of each nine-week period will be determined by a weighted average of homework, active class participation, class assignments, projects and assessments. A breakdown of the weights associated with each category is listed below.

Kindergarten Success Criteria (Scholars must meet a minimum of 8)

| Number of Points | Type of Measure | Success of Measure |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| 1 per quarter (4 points total, 1 for each quarter met) | Report card grade | Earn Proficient or Advanced on each end-of-quarter report card |
| 1 fall, 1 winter and 1 spring (3 points total, 1 for each term met) | Universal Screener: NWEA | Fall: 137 Winter: 146 Spring: 153 |
| CKLA unit assessments (5 points total, 1 for each unit) | Unit 3-7 | Scholars earn 70% or higher on each unit assessment |
| Total: 12 success criteria | | |

If a scholar meets the Spring NWEA RIT target, they automatically receive 3 points for that success measure.

First Grade Success Criteria (Students must meet a minimum of 12)

| Number of Points | Type of Measure | Success of Measure |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 per quarter (4 points total, 1 for each quarter met) | Report card grade | Earn 70% or higher on end-of-quarter report card |
| 1 fall, 1 winter and 1 spring (3 points total, 1 for each term met) | Universal Screener: NWEA | Fall: 156 Winter: 166 Spring: 171 |
| 1 fall, 1 winter and 1 spring (3 points total, 1 for each term met) | Universal Screener: iReady (Lexile) | Fall: 190 Winter: 250 Spring: 370 |

| | | |
|---|----------|---|
| CKLA unit assessments (7 points possible, 1 for each unit) | Unit 1-7 | Scholars earn 70% or higher on each unit assessment |
| Total: 17 success criteria | | |

If a scholar meets Spring NWEA RIT target and/or Spring iReady goal, they automatically receive 3 points.

Second Grade Success Criteria
(Students must meet a minimum of 10)

| Number of Points | Type of Measure | Success of Measure |
|--|--|--|
| 1 per quarter (4 points total, 1 for each quarter met) | Report card grade | Earn 70% or higher on end of quarter report card |
| 1 fall, 1 winter and 1 spring (3 points total, 1 for each term met) | Universal Screener: NWEA | Fall: 172 Winter: 181 Spring: 185 |
| 1 fall, 1 winter and 1 spring (3 points total, 1 for each term met) | Universal Screener: iReady (Lexile) | Fall: Lexile 370 Winter: Lexile 450 Spring: Lexile 520 |
| 1 fall, 1 winter and 1 spring (3 points total, 1 for each term met) | Summative Assessment: Interim Assessment CASE | On-track or mastery |
| Total: 13 success criteria | | |

If a scholar meets any spring success measure, they automatically receive all points for that success measure.

GRADES K-1

Teachers will record a minimum of 16 grades for each nine-week period, with a minimum of at least one learning experience per grading category. Fifty percent of the 16 grades will be earned and recorded at the midpoint of each quarter. Grades will be reported on report cards and transcript records using the letter grades and numerical values listed below.

Grading policy - categories and weights (K-1)

| Categories | Weights |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Homework | 10% |
| Active Classroom Participation | 30% |
| Class Assignments | 40% |
| Projects | 10% |
| Assessments | 10% |

Grading scale for reading and math only (K-1)

| Letter Grade | Numerical % | Explanation |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| A | 90-100 | Advanced |
| P | 80-89 | Proficient |
| B | 60-79 | Basic |
| BB | 59-0 | Below Basic |

Grading scale for science, social studies and electives

| Letter Grade | Numerical % | | | | Explanation |
|--------------|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|
| E | 90-100 | | | | Excellent |
| S | 80-89 | | | | Satisfactory |
| N | 60-79 | | | | Needs Improvement |
| U | 59-0 | | | | Unsatisfactory |
| K-1 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | |
| | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | |

GRADES 2 – 8

Teachers will record a minimum of 16 grades for each nine-week period, with a minimum of at least one learning experience per grading category. Fifty percent of the 16 grades will be earned and recorded at the midpoint of each quarter. Grades will be reported on report cards and transcript records using the letter grades and numerical values listed below.

Grading policy - categories and weights (2-8)

| Categories | Weights |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Homework | 10% |
| Active Classroom Participation | 10% |
| Class Assignments | 30% |
| Projects | 20% |
| Assessments | 30% |

Grading policy - categories and weights (2-8)

| Letter Grade | Numerical % | Explanation |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| A | 90-100 | Mastery |
| B | 80-89 | Proficiency |
| C | 70-79 | Approaching |
| D | 60-69 | Basic |
| F | 59-0 | Below Basic |

| 2-5 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Y1 |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 100% |

| 6-8 | S1 | | S2 | | Y1 | | | Y1 |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-----|------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | S1 | S2 | T1 | |
| | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% | 42.5% | 42.5% | 15% | 100% |

GRADES 9-12

Teachers will record a minimum of 16 grades for each nine-week period, with a minimum of at least one learning experience per grading category. Fifty percent of the 16 grades will be earned and recorded at the midpoint of each quarter. Grades will be reported on report cards and transcript records using the letter grades and numerical values listed below.

Grading policy - categories and weights (9-12)

| Categories | Weights |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Homework | 10% |
| Active Classroom Participation | 10% |
| Class Assignments | 30% |
| Projects | 20% |
| Assessments | 30% |

Grading Policy - grading scale (9-12)

| Letter Grade | Numerical % | Explanation |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| A | 90-100 | Mastery |
| B | 80-89 | Proficiency |
| C | 70-79 | Approaching |
| D | 60-69 | Basic |
| F | 59-0 | Below Basic |

| 9-12 w/o EOC | S1 | | | S2 | | | Y1 | |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----|-----------|-----------|-----|-----|-----|
| | Q1 | Q2 | X1 | Q3 | Q4 | X2 | S1 | S2 |
| | 42.5 % | 42.5 % | 15% | 42.5 % | 42.5 % | 15% | 50% | 50% |

| 9-12 EOC | S1 | | | S2 | | Y1 | | |
|-------------|-----------|-------|---------|---------|-----|-------|-------|-----|
| | Q1 | Q2 | X1 | Q3 | Q4 | S1 | S1 | T1 |
| | 42.5 % | 42.5% | 15 % | 50 % | 50% | 42.5% | 42.5% | 15% |

Citizenship and Conduct

In addition to scholars operating at a high level of proficiency, conduct and citizenship is very important. GCS expects scholars to work hard and to be kind toward their peers, teachers and administration. GCS scholars do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. Our scholars act appropriately, even when others are not observing their actions.

| Explanation | | Elementary Criteria | Middle and High School Criteria |
|-------------|-------------------|--|--|
| E | Excellent | 0-2 negative behavior logs and no office referrals | 0 negative behavior logs and no office referrals |
| S | Satisfactory | 3-5 negative behavior logs | 1-2 negative behavior logs |
| N | Needs Improvement | 6-8 negative behavior logs | 3-5 negative behavior logs |
| U | Unsatisfactory | 9+ negative behavior logs | 6+ negative behavior logs |

Conduct logs from all teachers will be reviewed before a scholar's final conduct is assigned. Scholars who have three or more behavior logs within one teacher's class will be required to attend a parent/teacher conference.

Intervention

The school is responsible for ensuring scholars who are experiencing academic difficulties are identified by their teachers and reported to the principal as early in the school year as possible. The school is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate intervention services and programs are used to assist scholars in reaching academic benchmarks. Academic interventions will be required for scholars who:

- are at risk of failing the current school year;
- are not meeting state standards for grade level performance;
- are one or more years behind grade level in a course or grade; and
- are not performing at the level to meet the College Readiness Benchmarks

Schools will notify parents of the scholars' academic progress and advise them of recommended intervention opportunities. Intervention services and programs may include, but are not limited to:

- additional structured instruction outside the standard school day (structured before, after school and week-end instruction);
- computer-based individualized instruction;
- a summer or extended year program;
- one-to-one, small group or subject-specific tutoring programs;
- an intervention program during the next school year;

- Course Recovery classes.

Promotion and Course Recovery

Scholars receiving a final grade of 70% or higher in all courses will be promoted to the next grade. Please note that attendance factors into your scholar's promotion. Please see the truancy policy.

Retention

- Grades 1-8 scholars earning less than 60% in reading **and** mathematics will be retained to his or her current grade.
- Grade 3 scholars who are not proficient on end-of-year state assessment may be retained to their current grade (see below).
- Kindergarten scholars who earn less than 59% average in reading and mathematics are retained to his or her current grade.
- Grades 9-12 scholars earning less than 70% in any course must attend summer school to acquire course credit. Scholars can only take up to two courses in summer school. Summer school is not leveraged for early graduation.

Third grade retention law (T.C.A. § 49-6-3115)

Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, a student in the third grade shall not be promoted to the next grade level unless the student is determined to be proficient in English Language Arts (ELA), based on the student achieving a performance level rating of "on track" or "mastered" on the ELA portion of the student's most recent Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) test.

Notwithstanding subdivision:

- A. The student is an English language learner and has received less than two (2) years of ELA instruction.
- B. The student was previously retained in any grade (K-3).
- C. The student is retested before the beginning of the next school year and scores proficient in ELA.
- D. The student attends a learning loss bridge camp before the beginning of the upcoming school year; maintains a ninety percent (90%) attendance rate at the camp; and the student's performance on the posttest administered to the student at the end of the learning loss bridge camp, as required under § 4961502(4)(F), demonstrates adequate growth, as determined by the department.
- E. The student is assigned a tutor through the Tennessee Accelerating Literacy and Learning Corps (TALLC) to provide the student with tutoring services for the entirety of the upcoming school year based on tutoring requirements established by the department.

If your scholar has an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan), promotion and/or retention remains an IEP team decision.

Maintaining Your Child's Enrollment Status

All schools enroll new families prior to the end of the year. We expect all scholars to be promoted to the next grade, which means we fill all open seats with new scholars. This means schools do not hold seats for retained scholars. Therefore, your child is in jeopardy of not returning to PCA if all seats are filled. Parents will need to contact their school to confirm enrollment status if their scholar is retained.

Summer School Requirements

Promoted but failed reading or math

The summer program is designed to close the content gaps and provide intervention support to ensure success in the next grade. This four-week program is not for promotion. If a scholar does not attend GCS' summer program, he/she is in jeopardy of losing the seat. Parents will need to contact their school to confirm enrollment status if their scholar is retained.

GCS summer school is required for the following scholars:

- Kindergarten scholars who earn less than 59% average in reading and/or mathematics are required to attend summer school (below basic based upon kindergarten grading scale).
- Grades 1-8 scholars who earn less than 70% average in reading and/or mathematics are required to attend summer school.
- Grades 9-12 scholars who earn less than 70% average in reading, mathematics, science and/or social studies. Please note that high school seniors can only take two courses during the summer program.
- Grades K-9 scholars whose reading and/or mathematics NWEA RIT Spring Scores fall in the lower quartile.
- Grades 3-8 scholars who score below or approaching on final interim assessment.
- Any scholar whose attendance is below 90%.

K-8 retained for failing reading and math

Because GCS does not offer promotional summer school, parents can choose to enroll his/her scholar in the MSCS summer school, which provides an opportunity for a scholar to be promoted to the next grade. If a scholar attends the MSCS summer school and passes all courses, parents will be moved to the school's waiting list. However, no seat is guaranteed to the scholar. It is the parents' responsibility to reach out to MSCS to enroll their child in the summer school program.

9-12 course recovery

High school scholars who fail two or more credit-bearing courses are in jeopardy of losing their seat at the school. PCA High does not offer multiple sessions of courses which means that no extra seat is given to scholars who need to repeat a course. Parents should reach out the school guidance counselor to ensure your child is on track for graduation.

Cellular and Communication Devices Policy

All K-5 scholars are **banned** from possessing any type of phone or personal communication device that is **turned on or is visible/audible** at any time during the regular school day. For the purpose of this policy, possession means found in any article of clothing, purse, book bag, carry bag or in any location on school property other than the approved storage location as written and approved by school officials.

All 6-8 scholars are required to check in any personal cellular or communication device upon arrival to school personnel and are permitted to check out the device upon dismissal. Scholars are not permitted to carry their cellular device throughout the school day. For the purpose of this policy, possession means found in any article of clothing, purse, book bag, carry bag or in any location on school property other than the approved storage location, as written and approved by school officials.

All 9-12 scholars are required to turn off their phones, Bluetooth watches/air Pods, and lock them in a Yondr pouch upon arrival to school. Scholars can carry their phones, but it must be in a locked pouch during school hours. Scholars will have access to the Yondr system to unlock their phones as they exit the building for dismissal. For the purpose of this policy, any phone that is found unlocked during the school day will result in disciplinary actions.

The school is **not responsible** for any loss or theft of a device while on school property.

Failure to comply to the cellular device policy will result in the following:

- **First offense** (administrative warning): The parent will be notified, and the device will be returned at the **end of the school day** to the parent after dismissal.
- **Second offense** (after-school or Saturday reflection): The parent will be notified, and administration will hold the device for **48 hours**. The device will then be returned to the parent or guardian. The scholar will receive after-school or Saturday reflection.
- **Third offense** (one-day suspension): The parent will be notified, and the scholar will receive a one-day suspension with a mandatory parent conference. The device will be returned within a **10-day period**.
- **Fourth offense** (three to five-day suspension): The parent will be notified, and the scholar will receive a **three to five-day suspension** with a mandatory parent conference. The scholar's device privileges will be **revoked**.

***Please note:** Continuous disregard for the school cell phone and electronic device policy after the fourth offense will follow the school's code of conduct for repeated offenses and may result in a three to five day out-of-school suspension (OSS) – in conjunction with confiscating the device for at least, but not limited to, two weeks.

Code of Conduct

The GCS network uses the Response to Instruction and Intervention-Behavior (RTI²-B) framework to provide support for our scholars. Scholars are encouraged to exhibit positive behavior. Scholars are expected to learn to monitor their own behavior and actions. As a part of the RTI²-B framework, data is collected on individual scholar behavior; appropriate behavior is acknowledged and celebrated; and frameworks for school-wide accountability are provided to all stakeholders. Please note that the below conduct charts are recommended consequences. It doesn't cover all consequences. The school administration has the authority to determine the final consequences.

K-5 Code of Conduct



| Stages | Behaviors | Interventions | Suggested Strategies |
|---|--|---|---|
| <div style="border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">1</div> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling • Teasing or Taunting • Inappropriate Language/Interaction • Inappropriate use of electronics • Being in an unauthorized area without permission • Violation of school cell phone or electronic device policy • Continuous talking after repeated redirection. • Continuously blurting out during class • Getting out of seat without permission • Not following adult requests • Cheating or plagiarism • Crying with intent to disturb • Vulgar/profane language/gestures • Threatening Gestures- no intent to harm • Inappropriate bathroom behavior | <p>For Stage 1 Behaviors, Follow Progressive Accountability steps 1-4.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Global Behavior Monitoring Reminder: Teacher reminds class and sets expectation that the clip chart will be used to monitor behavior. 2. Private Redirect: Give a private, verbal redirection to a scholar in a way that supports positive scholar-teacher relationship. 3. Visual Cue: Teacher gives visual cue regarding behavior using the classroom clip chart. 4. "What's Up?": Teacher gives visual choice board to share perspective. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to physical environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seat in area free from distractions ○ Proximity to teacher ○ Removal of triggers (i.e. separate scholars in conflict or public redirect) • Reteach behavioral expectations • Provide short breaks • Provide choice • Utilize (Calming Corner) to provide opportunity to reset. |
| <div style="border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">2</div> | <p><u>Repeated Stage 1 behaviors.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate Physical Contact with other scholars: pushing, bumping or horseplay. • Property Misuse • Inappropriate use of electronic media, including, but not cameras and camera phones • Elopement/ Class cutting: On Campus • Unauthorized possession of medication (i.e. pain medication or cough syrup etc.) • Possession of non-lethal firearm (replica gun, water gun) | <p>For Stage 2 Behaviors, Follow Progressive Accountability steps 5-8.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Provide Extended Reflection Time 6. Make Scholar Support Team Referral to the School Counselor for repeated behaviors. This may result in a Tier 2 Support Plan. (Tier 2 Support Plans are managed by counselors and supported by teachers) <p>Note: Three or more incidents of Stage 1 may constitute a pattern.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Phone Call • Referral to Reflection during School (Lunch or Recess) • Create Behavior Log in PowerSchool to Identify and track Behavior/ Intervention • Re-Teach Behavioral Expectations (Individual or Classroom-Wide) • Provide short breaks (Individual or Classroom-Wide) • Utilize Calming Corner within the classroom to provide opportunity for reset. • Scholar Choice |
| <div style="border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">3</div> | <p><u>Repeated Stage 2 behaviors.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fighting: mutual fighting or instigated fighting with no injury. • Founded Bullying/cyberbullying, physical intimidation or hazing. • Possession of stolen property • Theft and/or Vandalism under \$500 • Threatening bodily harm to peer or school personnel, including cyber threats • Providing false statements against peer or school personnel • Smoking/use and/or the possession of tobacco or smoking hemp products, or electronic/vapor type products (e.g., e-cigarettes), or mase or taser, • unauthorized consumption/distribution of non-prescription drugs by students while (1) in school or on school properties, (2) under school's jurisdiction during school hours, or (3) participating in a school-sponsored event • Inappropriate sexual contact: minor contact of a sexual nature, such as touching over clothing. • Immoral or disreputable conduct • Elopement: Leaving campus • Trespassing on school grounds • Inappropriate Physical Contact Toward School Staff • Inappropriate Sexual Behavior (does not include sexual harassment or assault) • Possession of other weapons • Verbal or non-verbal threats toward school staff • Gang activities - any gang related activity not specified in Stage 4 • One (1) or more students initiating a physical attack on an individual student on school property or at a school-sponsored activity • Sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious harassment/discrimination <p>Violation of Bus Code of Conduct per PCAES Handbook</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide an administrative referral to the Dean of Scholars 2. School counselor will conduct a threat assessment to explore intent (weapon possession) 3. Restorative Conference / re-entry to community meeting. 4. Solution Focused Process in Collaborative Circles 5. Make Scholar Support Team Referral to the School Counselor for repeated behaviors. 6. Tier II Behavior Support for repeated behaviors, if applicable- School Counselor or conduct Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), that may result in a Behavior Intervention Plan. <p>Note: Three or more incidents of a Stage 2 may constitute a pattern and warrant a referral to an admin/school counselor.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Administrative Conference • Referral to Collaborative Circle • Individual Scholar Safety Plan • Individual Counseling or Group Counseling • Peer Mediation • Functional Behavior Assessment • Referral to Outside Agency <p>Note: Founded/Bullying or cyberbullying as identified in outcome of bullying/harassment investigation protocol</p> |

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|---|--|---|---|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">4</div> | <p><u>Repeated Stage 3 behaviors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fighting: Instigating a non-reciprocal fight with injury. • Mutual fighting with injury. • Inappropriate physical contact to school staff • Reporting a false emergency (fire alarm, bomb threat, school shooting, calling 911) • Discrimination/harassment based on sexual, ability, racial, ethnic, religious orientation. • Gang activities: threatening, intimidating, or harassment, or violent acts, recruiting; gang notebooks with gang • pledges, codes and symbols that are used in communication, gang graffiti especially drawn on school property (bathrooms, lockers and hall walls); • Theft and/or Vandalism over \$500 • Use of non-lethal weapon, knife, replica firearm, or other weapon on school property or at a school-sponsored activity • Being under the influence, use/possession of Alcohol/Drugs/or Tobacco at school or school sponsored activity • Possession of alcohol and tobacco, drug paraphernalia • Possession, use or distribution of counterfeit money on school property or at any school sponsored activity • consumption/distribution of over-the counter drugs with the intent to intoxicate and/or evidence of use or possession of drug • paraphernalia, substances for huffing, any substance under guise of it being a controlled substance or prescription drug, and/or medical preparations without proper medical authorization • Off campus criminal behavior that would be classified as a felony if the scholar was charged as an adult and the scholar's continued presence in school poses a danger to person or property or disrupts the educational process | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide an administrative referral to the Dean of Scholars 2. School counselor will conduct a threat assessment to explore intent (weapon possession) 3. Restorative Conference / re-entry to community meeting. 4. Solution Focused Process in Collaborative Circles 5. Make Scholar Support Team Referral to the School Counselor for repeated behaviors. 6. Conduct Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), that may result in a Behavior Intervention Plan. <p>Note: Three or more incidents of a Stage 3 may constitute a pattern.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a parent and administrator mandatory conference. • Intervention Plan and/or safety plan • Make a referral to school counselor or social worker. • Conflict resolution where appropriate • Out of school suspension within a range of 1 to 10 days. • Expulsion (11-180 day) |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">5</div> | <p><u>Repeated Stage 4 Behaviors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggravated Assault resulting in serious injury to any scholar, school staff member or school vendor • Possession, distribution or sale of drugs or drug paraphernalia at school or school-sponsored activity • Possession of explosives, firearms at school or school-sponsored activity • A person who recklessly, by any means of communication, threatens to commit an act of mass violence on school property or at a school-related activity | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Repeated Stage 4</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. If 1-3, have been completed, refer scholar to Disciplinary Review Board (Chief Academic Officer & Scholar Support Team) 5. Contact Local law enforcement. 6. 180 school days of expulsion/suspension <p><u>Drugs, Explosives, Firearms</u> Referral to Disciplinary Review Board</p> | <p>Contact LEA for alternative placement availability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Students with disabilities services outlined in the IEP must continue until placement in alternative setting. |

Supported by Classroom Teachers

Supported by School Leaders

The behaviors are examples of misconduct. The behaviors are not limited to what is listed in the chart.



6-12 Code of Conduct



| Stages | Behaviors | Interventions | Suggested Strategies |
|----------|---|---|--|
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tardy Non-compliance with school uniform policy Low-Intensity Disruption Inappropriate Language, does not include profanity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Stage 1 Behaviors, Follow Progressive Accountability Steps 1-2: Private Redirect - Teacher gives a private redirect in a positive, scholar-centered manner. (Daily) What's Up?: Teacher gives the scholar an opportunity to share perspective. (Daily-if not the same behavior) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change to physical environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seat in area free from distraction Close Proximity to teacher Removal of triggers Reteach behavioral expectations Provide short breaks Provide choice Utilize safe space to provide opportunity to reset |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated and/or severe Stage 1 Non-Compliance with adult requests Taunting or Teasing Misuse of Property Inappropriate behavior in bathroom Non-Compliance with cell phone and electronic device policy Cheating and Plagiarism Verbal argument with another scholar and/or staff member Technology Violation-Inappropriate use of electronic devices Physical Aggression- no injury Inappropriate Gestures Unauthorized possession of medication prescribed or non-prescribed; no intent to distribute. Inappropriate location/out of bounds area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Stage 2 Behaviors, Follow Progressive Accountability Steps 3-7: Referral to Lunch or After-school Reflection and provide a phone call to the parent. Intervention: Teacher will facilitate Tier I CICO and sends notification to parent, counselor and dean). Teacher makes a referral to the Collaborative Circle and a phone call to the parent. Make a referral to the Scholar Support Team for repeated behavioral infractions which are not in stages 3-5. Provide an administrative referral to the Dean of Scholars/Principal after steps 1- 4 are completed or if the scholar escalates the behavior to stages 3-5. Note: Three or more incidents of a Stage 1 or 2 may constitute a pattern and require a referral to applicable services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent Phone Call Referral to Reflection Create Behavior Log in PowerSchool to identify and track Behavior/ Intervention Re-Teach Behavioral Expectations (Individual or Classroom-Wide) Removal of privileges Provide choice Provide short breaks Utilize safe space within the classroom to provide opportunity for reset |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated Stage 2 behaviors Tampering with grades or report cards Possession of lighters or matches and/or any forms of contrabands Class Cutting Inappropriate use of electronic media, including, but not limit to, all calls (landlines, cellular or computer generated), instant messaging, text messages, video audio recording devices, mp3 or any type of electronic music or entertainment devices, including cameras and smart phones. Inappropriate Language, High Intensity including use of profanity or vulgar language Providing false written and/or verbal statement toward peers and/or school staff Founded Bullying, intimidation, and harassment (Cyber included) Inappropriate Physical Contact or Physical Aggression that results in injury Inappropriate public display of affection Fighting- mutual or instigated Theft, Vandalism, or damages to school property under \$500 Gang Affiliation Display and/or activity Verbal or written threat to harm Inappropriate Physical Contact towards School Staff and/or peer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restorative Conference (ex. Scholar to Scholar, Scholar to Teacher, School to Family/Scholar) Refer Scholar to School Counselor upon re-entry to community Solution Focused Process in Collaborative Circles Make Scholar Support Team Referral to the School Counselor for repeated behaviors Tier II Behavior Intervention for repeated behaviors, if applicable- School Counselor Note: Three or more incidents of a Stage 3 may constitute a pattern and require a referral to applicable services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host a parent and administrator mandatory conference. Refer to Conflict Resolution with School Counselor if involved in a verbal or minor physical confrontation. Initiate Bullying/Harassment/Intimidation/ Hazing Investigation if in accordance with all associated reports Make a referral to a School Counselor to determine the need for an intervention plan or additional support services. Scholar assigned to multiple after-school reflections Hold Saturday Reflection. Administer a 1-2 Days Suspension. Administer a 3-5 Days Suspension for repeated infraction. |

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| <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">4</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated stage 3 behaviors • Unauthorized Visitors • Threats • Verbal or non-verbal credible threat to physically harm school staff or scholar(s), • Fighting-with injury instigated or mutual fighting with injury • Sexual Harassment • False report of Emergency/false alarm • Use/Possession of Alcohol/Drugs/or Tobacco • Being under the influence or Possession of alcohol and/or tobacco and or/ Vape (with THC) • Possession of drug paraphernalia • Evidence of alcohol or drug use without possession or sale • Gang activities –participation in recruitment/initiation of a scholar into a gang. • Inappropriate Physical Contact toward staff that results in injury • Inappropriate sexual behavior (does not include sexual assault or harassment). • Technology Violation-High Intensity • High level technological hacking • Theft, Vandalism, or damages to school property over \$500 • Possession of other weapons or non-lethal firearms/other items • Leaving Campus during school hours • Elopement • Possession/Distributing Counterfeit money • On School property or school sponsored event • Distribution of unauthorized medication prescribed or non-prescribed • Possession of knife or any potentially lethal weapon (i.e. taser or explosive) • Off campus criminal behavior that results in the student being legally charged with an offense that would be classified as a felony • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative Conference • Refer Scholar to School Counselor upon re-entry to community • Solution-Focused Process in Collaborative Circles • Scholar Support Team Referral to the School Counselor for repeated behaviors • Tier II/III Behavior Intervention for repeated behaviors, if applicable- School Counselor Note: Three or more incidents of a Stage 4 may constitute a pattern and can lead to a disciplinary hearing to explore additional support. • Restorative Conference • Scholar Support Team Referral to the School Counselor for repeated behaviors • Investigation • Tier III Behavior Intervention or referral to external resources for repeated behaviors, if applicable. • If 1-3, have been completed, refer scholar to Disciplinary Review Board • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a parent and administrator mandatory conference. • Threat Assessment must be completed for any threats to harm others. • Intervention Plan and/or Safety Plan • • Make a referral to a School Counselor or Social Worker. (Conflict Resolution where appropriate) • • Out of school suspension within a range of 1 to 10 days or Expulsion (11-180 days) • • Notify Law Enforcement (when appropriate) • Any modification of this penalty can only be made by the Superintendent • |
| <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">5</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero tolerance Offenses • A person who recklessly, by any means of communication, threatens to commit an act of mass violence on school property or at a school-related activity • Aggravated Assault/Sexual Assault • Intentional assault resulting in <i>serious bodily/emotional injury</i> upon any scholar, teacher, principal, administrator, school resource officer, or any other school employee • Viewing, sharing, or possession of child pornography • Unlawful Possession of Drugs/Alcohol/Paraphernalia/Vape • Unlawful possession, use, and/or sale of drugs/narcotics, vapes (THC) on school property or at a school-sponsored activity or field trip • Unauthorized possession of a firearm on school property or at a school sponsored activity • Use of any weapon with intent to harm others • Repeated Stage 4 behaviors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation • Notify law enforcement Authorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer Expulsion/Suspension for 180 Days • Referral to Discipline Hearing at Gestalt's Central Office. • Notify Law Enforcement • Any modification of this penalty can only be made by the Superintendent |

Supported by Classroom Teachers

Supported by School Leaders

The behaviors are examples of misconduct. The behaviors are not limited to what is listed in the chart.



Progressive Accountability

Progressive Accountability steps directly employ equitable discipline practices for all scholars regardless of race, gender and disability status. This aim is supported by multi-disciplinary interventions curated in an integrated prevention and response model. Progressive Accountability is grounded by the following beliefs:

- Scholar behavior is a physical manifestation of skill deficits and not a representation of the will of the student.
- Teacher response to scholar behavior is a crucial component in social skill building.
- Multiple disciplines must be consulted and embedded in practice to support the functionality of the classroom intervention. These disciplines include human lifespan and development, teacher strategies, behavior analysis, special education, education law and policy, discipline approaches and adolescent group and individual counseling treatment approaches.

Progressive Accountability – ES

A restorative guide for teachers and staff to build authentic relationships and address scholar behavior.

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|---|---|
| 1 | Global Behavior Monitoring Reminder: Teacher reminds class and sets expectation that the clip chart will be used to monitor behavior. State the behavior/expectation/skill you are trying to increase and the incentive to reinforce the expectation. |
| 2 | Private Redirect: Teacher gives a private, verbal redirection to a scholar in a way that supports positive scholar-teacher relationship and tells the scholar what he or she should be doing (What to Do). |
| 3 | Visual Cue: Teacher gives visual cue regarding behavior using the classroom clip chart or reward system. |
| 4 | What's Up Form: Teacher gives visual choice board to share perspective and problem-solve. (K-2) What's Up Form: Teacher gives scholar an opportunity to share perspective and problem-solve. (3-5) (If scholar's behaviors are frequent or repetitive, teacher will make parent phone call.) |
| 5 | Referral to Reflection Teacher documents referral in PowerSchool and notifies administration. (After-School, Lunch, etc.) |
| 6 | Referral to Collaborative Circle |
| 7 | Behavior Intervention: Teacher implements Tier I CI/CO and notifies parent, counselor, and dean. |
| 8 | S-Team Referral: Teacher makes Scholar Support Team (S-Team) referral to the School Counselor for repeated behavioral infractions which are not in stages 3-5. |
| 9 | Administrative Referral Teacher documents referral in PowerSchool and notifies the Dean of Scholars or school leader in a dean's absence. Note: Admin referrals are automatically given for stage 3 or higher infractions on the code of conduct or with repetitive and persisting behaviors that were addressed by utilizing all prior steps 1- 4 above. |

Log Steps 4-9

Progressive Accountability – MS

A restorative guide for teachers and staff to build authentic relationships and address scholar behavior.

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|---|---|
| 1 | <p><u>Private Redirect:</u> Teacher gives a private, verbal redirection to a scholar in a way that supports positive scholar-teacher relationship and tells the scholar what he or she should be doing (What to Do).</p> |
| 2 | <p><u>What's Up Form:</u> Teacher gives visual choice board to share perspective and problem-solve. (If scholar's behaviors are frequent or repetitive, teacher makes a parent phone call.)</p> |
| 3 | <p><u>Referral to Reflection</u> Teacher documents referral in PowerSchool and notifies administration. (After-School, Lunch, etc.)</p> |
| 4 | <p><u>Referral to Collaborative Circle</u> Teacher documents in PowerSchool and notifies administration. Contact parent and provide what's up the form(s) to administration and parent when applicable.</p> |
| 5 | <p><u>Intervention:</u> Teacher facilitates Tier I CICO and sends notification to parent, counselor and dean.</p> |
| 6 | <p><u>S-Team Referral:</u> Teacher makes Scholar Support Team (S-Team) referral to the School Counselor for repeated behavioral infractions in stages 1-2 on the code of conduct.</p> |
| 7 | <p><u>Administrative Referral</u> Teacher documents referral in PowerSchool and notifies the Dean of Scholars or school leader in a dean's absence. Note: Admin referrals are automatically given for stage 3 or higher infraction on the code of conduct or with repetitive and persisting behaviors that were addressed by utilizing all prior steps 1-2 above.</p> |

Log Steps 2-7

Progressive Accountability – HS

A restorative guide for teachers and staff to build authentic relationships and address scholar behavior.

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|---|---|
| 1 | <p><u>Private Redirect:</u> Teacher gives a private, verbal redirection to a scholar in a way that supports positive scholar-teacher relationship and tells the scholar what he or she should be doing (What to Do).</p> |
| 2 | <p><u>What's Up Form:</u> Teacher gives visual choice board to share perspective and problem-solve. (If scholar's behaviors are frequent or repetitive, teacher makes a parent phone call.)</p> |
| 3 | <p><u>Referral to Reflection</u> Teacher documents referral in PowerSchool and notifies administration. (After-School, Lunch, etc.)</p> |
| 4 | <p><u>Referral to Collaborative Circle</u> Teacher documents in PowerSchool and notifies administration. Contact parent and provide what's up the form(s) to administration and parent when applicable.</p> |
| 5 | <p><u>Intervention:</u> Teacher facilitates Tier I CICO and sends notification to parent, counselor and dean.</p> |
| 6 | <p><u>S-Team Referral:</u> Teacher makes Scholar Support Team (S-Team) referral to the School Counselor for repeated behavioral infractions in stages 1-2 on the code of conduct.</p> |
| 7 | <p><u>Administrative Referral</u> Teacher documents referral in PowerSchool and notifies the Dean of Scholars or school leader in a dean's absence. Note: Admin referrals are automatically given for stage 3 or higher infraction on the code of conduct or with repetitive and persisting behaviors that were addressed by utilizing all prior steps 1-2 above.</p> |

Log Steps 2-7

Exclusionary Discipline Measures

Gestalt Community Schools recognizes the impact exclusionary discipline practices have on scholar success. As practicable, exclusionary measures should be used minimally: (1) to sustain a safe and orderly educational environment, and (2) after positive support and intervention measures have been implemented without a change in the behavior. The department responsible for attendance and discipline shall communicate expectations for implementation and documentation of the 2025-2026 Gestalt Community Schools Family Handbook support measures. In cases of severe, continuous, and/or extreme behaviors, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and remand may be warranted.

A. Out-of-School Suspension Out-of-school suspensions vary in length from one (1) to ten (10) days. It is not the intent of the system to remove scholars from the school society for minor violations. Therefore, suspension from school should be used with caution and only in appropriate cases. The principal, including vice/assistant principal, has sole discretion to issue out-of-school suspensions from one (1) to ten (10) days.

1. A behavioral intervention plan shall be developed for scholars who accumulate more than five days of suspension during the school year.
2. Multiple suspensions shall not run consecutively; nor shall multiple suspensions be applied to avoid expulsion from school.

Reasonable effort shall be made to contact the parent/guardian immediately regarding any suspension. If contact with the parent/guardian cannot be made, the scholar will remain at school until dismissal time except in cases of police arrest or an emergency, such as when the scholar's continued presence poses a danger to persons or property in the school or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process. Scholars on suspension must not be permitted to set foot on school property, attend class, or participate in school-sponsored activities while under suspension, unless otherwise allowed by law and/or Board policy (see §TCA 49-6-3401(d) and Board Policy 6055 Alternative Schools) or when scheduled with the school administration to take exams.

B. Expulsion (Long-term Suspension) Expulsions vary in length from eleven (11) to 180 days. (Any single suspension in excess of ten (10) consecutive days or multiple suspensions totaling fifteen (15) days in one month is an expulsion.) The principal may issue expulsions subject to scholar legal due process rights regarding appeals of expulsions (suspension of more than ten (10) days) and in accordance with the GCS Scholar Code of Conduct. The Superintendent may modify a state-mandated 180-day expulsion on a case-by-case basis. scholars/parents or guardians may choose to appeal an expulsion. Pre-K through Second Grade Scholars Prior to issuing an expulsion to a scholar in Pre-Kindergarten through second grade, the school administrator should consult with the department responsible for attendance and discipline with evidence of specific multi-tiered support that has been implemented and documented to address the behavior(s).

Threat Assessment Associated with Expulsion

1. When the scholar's infraction involves: (a) a credible/substantive threat of harm; b) possession of a dangerous weapon (firearm, knife, taser, explosive, etc.); (c) assault resulting in bodily injury to staff/scholar(s); or (d) off-campus felony with a firearm, the principal/assistant principal or designee shall:
 - (i) consult with appropriate District staff responsible for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) including SPED and 504, to determine whether a scholar has an identified or suspected need for services under IDEA and hold a manifestation determination meeting if necessary; and
 - (ii) immediately refer the scholar for threat assessment to determine the scholar's level of risk and guide safety planning, not assignment or disciplinary actions. The department responsible for threat assessment shall provide the names of

scholars referred for threat assessment to all applicable departments necessary to provide services for the scholar upon assignment (i.e., attendance and discipline, safety and security, alternative schools, etc.) 2. A threat assessment advisement period must be completed by the department responsible for mental health. If extenuating circumstances exist preventing completion of a threat assessment within ten (10) business days of the suspension (e.g., failure of parental/guardian/family participation in the threat assessment, incarceration of scholar, etc.), the scholar committing a non-zero tolerance offense will be remanded to an alternative school in compliance with T.C.A. §49-6-3402. Any placement decision made by the department responsible for alternative school must comply with IDEA and ADA requirements, and other applicable federal and state laws. The department responsible for alternative school shall implement an interim safety plan pending completion of the threat assessment. The interim safety plan will be developed in collaboration with, as deemed necessary, 2025-2026 Gestalt Community Schools Family Handbook, District administrative committee involving departments responsible for attendance and discipline, coordinated school health, threat assessment, 504 implementation, special education services, safety and security, and legal services. Remand to an alternative school shall not preclude any District requirement for conducting a threat assessment. Threat assessment findings and recommendations may be utilized in drafting a final safety plan for the scholar. 3. Scholars expelled as a result of a zero-tolerance offense will be informed by the office responsible for alternative schools that the placement decision is being taken under advisement. Exemptions from the advisement period shall be governed by applicable federal and state law, (e.g., IDEA). C. Motor Vehicle or Permit License Revocation In accordance with state law, any scholar fifteen (15) years of age or older who withdraws from school shall be reported to the Department of Safety by the Superintendent (or designee) or the attendance teacher. When the withdrawal from school is due to circumstances beyond the control of the scholar, no notice should be sent to the Department of Safety. The Principal (or designee), with the assistance of the attendance teacher and any other staff or school personnel, shall be the sole judge of whether withdrawal is due to circumstances beyond the control of the scholar. Suspension, expulsion, or confinement in a correctional institution shall not constitute a circumstance beyond the control of a scholar. The Principal (or designee), with the assistance of the attendance teacher and any other staff or school personnel, shall be the sole judge of whether withdrawal is due to circumstances beyond the control of the scholar. Suspension, expulsion, or confinement in a correctional institution shall not constitute a circumstance beyond the control of a scholar.

Appealing Scholar Discipline

TCA 1002: Suspension of More Than Ten (10) Days (i.e. Expulsion): If a scholar commits an infraction that warrants a suspension/expulsion of more than ten (10) days, that scholar shall be remanded to alternative school for the duration of the suspension/expulsion, except under special circumstances. Immediately following the decision to suspend/expel/remand for more than ten (10) days, the scholar and the scholar's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be immediately notified, in writing, of the suspension and the scholar's right to appeal to a Disciplinary Hearing Authority (DHA) within five (5) school days. The written notification shall be accompanied by copies of all school policies and procedures related to DHA appeals.

Special Education Considerations

Scholars who also qualify for special education services determined to have violated this policy may be suspended, expelled, or remanded or otherwise disciplined only in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and policies. For zero tolerance offenses, remand of a scholar who qualifies for special education services must be based on recommendation of the IEP team consistent with IDEA; and the scholar must have a manifestation meeting prior to remand or exclusion from school for over ten (10) days. Unless a disciplinary infraction is the direct result of a child's disability, the child will be disciplined in the same manner as a nondisabled child. The District, parent/guardian, and relevant members of the IEP team shall review all relevant information to determine: 1. if the conduct was a direct result of the District's failure to implement the IEP; and/or 2. if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability. Serious safety issues involving weapons, drugs, or inflicting bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function will result in removal for up to 45 school days. In cases of expulsions (suspensions longer than ten (10) days), the child must continue to receive educational services. Regular education scholars may invoke rights under applicable federal and state laws under certain conditions, including if the parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of the District, or the child's teacher, that the child is in need of special education and related services. The school district must also contact the Education Specialist at the Department of Children's Services if a foster child (with or without an identified disability) has allegedly committed an offense that may result in a suspension of ten (10) or more days or has had a petition filed against him/her by the school or school system.

Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment and Intimidation

Gestalt Community Schools aims to maintain a safe, diverse and inclusive environment. Any reports or incidents involving bullying, harassment and intimidation will be addressed immediately through a comprehensive investigation within 48 hours of the report. Investigation may result in additional counseling support, interventions and suspension. Our Dean of Scholars facilitates the investigation process at the school level, and the Scholar Support team supervises this process at the network level.

How are bullying and cyberbullying defined in Tennessee's anti-bullying laws and regulations?

Tennessee's anti-bullying laws and regulations include the following definitions of harassment, intimidation or bullying and cyberbullying:

Harassment, intimidation or bullying means any act that substantially interferes with a scholar's educational benefits, opportunities or performance; and:

- (A) If the act takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation or at any official school bus stop, the act has the effect of:
 - (i) Physically harming a scholar or damaging a scholar's property;
 - (ii) Knowingly placing a scholar or scholars in reasonable fear of physical harm to the

- scholar or damage to the scholar's property;
 - (iii) Causing emotional distress to a scholar or scholars; or
 - (iv) Creating a hostile educational environment; or
- (B) If the act takes place off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, it is directed specifically at a scholar or scholars and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process.

“Cyber-bullying” means bullying undertaken through the use of electronic devices.
Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-4502 (2011)



STOPit Solutions provides anonymous reporting for bullying, allowing scholars and parents to report safety, misconduct or compliance concerns to help others or connect with the dean of scholars. All parents will receive a login letter from the school to gain access to their STOPit account.

Sports Team, Clubs and Organizations

At Gestalt Community Schools, academic progress is our priority. However, we believe scholars also need a balance of extracurricular activities, and we offer several athletic sports programs and clubs that operate after school. Some of these programs, which occur throughout the school year, include volleyball, basketball, track, cheer, dance, soccer and various clubs.

Parents or guardians of scholars interested in participating in a sport must attend the parent interest meeting for that particular sport. The interest meetings are held prior to the start of the sport. Scholar athletes and their parents/guardians must agree to the policies outlined in the GCS Athletic Handbook. It is important to note that there is a fee, or fundraising goal, parents must agree to prior to their scholar participating in a sport. The fee schedule for each athletic program or club is outlined in the GCS Athletic Handbook.

Scholar athletes must maintain proper behavior and conduct in order to participate in any athletic program with Gestalt Community Schools. Disciplinary action could jeopardize the scholar's participation in an athletic program.

During GCS events, including athletic events and practices, adults should model appropriate behavior at all times. If inappropriate behavior occurs, the following steps will be taken:

- **First occurrence:** Warning or possible suspension from future events, depending on the severity of the behavior
- **Second occurrence:** Suspension from attending events
- **Third occurrence:** Adult prohibited from attending events for the remainder of the year

In addition, scholars engaging in an athletic program or other extracurricular activities, such as clubs and organizations, must maintain a C or higher grade average in all subjects in order to maintain academic eligibility. In addition, the scholar must maintain satisfactory conduct grades. If a GCS scholar's grades fall below a C average in any subject, the scholar will be placed on probation and faced with the possibility of removal from the organization or team. As an academic intervention, all school sports teams will hold athletic study hall prior to practice sessions. In addition to academic eligibility, scholars must also adhere to the Attendance Policy found on page 11 of this document. Scholars issued a suspension are not allowed to participate in any athletic program, club or organization during the suspension period.

Fee Payments

Gestalt Community Schools will no longer accept cash or checks. In an effort to make paying scholar's fees more convenient and improving efficiency, GCS has moved to the cashless system, *e~Funds for Schools*. Parents will only be able to make payments online. Operated by a third party, this secure system allows parents to pay all scholar fees online via ACH or credit card. While there is a fee involved, the fee is nominal at \$1 for an ACH (electronic check payment) transaction and \$2.65 per \$100 for credit or debit card transactions. Through this system, parents are able to make one-time or recurring payments.

How does *e~Funds for Schools* work?

- Families set up and maintain their own logins, passwords and payment preferences. The account information is retained in a password-protected file. Instructions in Spanish can be found by clicking [Instructions in Spanish](#). Instructions in English can be found by clicking [Instructions in English](#).
- Payments from a credit card or checking account may easily be set up.
- Parents/guardians may establish a recurring payment or may opt to make a one-time payment.
- The program offers various types of payment to families that include but are not limited to: instructional materials, athletic fees, club fees, field trip fees, yearbook fees, graduation fees and food service payments.
- Payment history for the year is available with a click of the mouse.

Parents will be provided with the necessary information to set up their scholar's account during orientation. Parents can also contact the office staff at their scholar's school for assistance.

School Visits and Teacher Conferences

Visitors must report to the main receptionist station. All visitors must sign in at the front desk with their state or international ID in order to receive a visitor's badge. School personnel must escort visitors throughout the building.

Parents or guardians who would like to visit their scholars' classes should follow the instructions below:

- Set an appointment at least 48 hours prior to the visit.
- Plan to visit at least two consecutive classes.
- Complete school classroom observation feedback form and return to the school principal.
- Refrain from conferencing with the teacher during instruction.
- Abstain from interacting with your scholar or other scholars during instruction.

Parents who would like to schedule a parent/teacher conference may do so by contacting the teacher directly via email. Teachers are available for conferences during their planning periods or afterschool. If a teacher does not respond within a 48-hour period, then a parent can contact the school administration for a follow-up meeting.

During the parent conference, we work in partnership with our parents to follow the protocol below:

- State the reason for conference.
- Provide opportunity for parent and teacher to respond to the problem.
- Establish a collaborative plan to solve the problem.
- Provide specific time to follow up to monitor the effectiveness of the plan.

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