

**Gaston County Schools**  
**Safety and Security General Information**  
(revised 8/4/2011)

Gaston County Schools is comprised of fifty-five schools, with more than 31,000 students and 4,000 employees. We are the largest employer in Gaston County. Safety best practice recommendations call for an “all hazards approach” for school site planning. Plans address such events as natural disasters, utility failure, accidents, fire, hazardous materials, radiological incidents and other such situations, as well as intentional acts such as bomb threats and acts of violence.

Each of our school sites and facilities are different. Because of the varied locations and physical layout of school facilities, it is necessary for each school to customize a security plan that meets the security requirements for the specific location. Each school principal is responsible for the development and implementation of safety/security plans for the school.

The following security procedures, programs, systems and resources are in place or in progress based on the site specific needs at each individual school.

**Student Code of Conduct**

The Gaston County Board of Education has a Policy governing student conduct and violations of the Policy. School administrators are required to use the Policy.

**Critical Incident Response Training**

Principals and Assistant Principals have been provided specific information on the techniques and response of law enforcement in the event of a major crisis at a school. Gaston County law enforcement agencies train their officers for active shooter incidents and special tactical teams train on school and school bus hostage scenarios several times per year at school sites. School personnel are required to have Critical Incident Response training each school year.

**Emergency Operation Plans/Guidelines**

All schools have been issued guidelines to be utilized to develop emergency plans tailored to their school facility and local conditions. These guidelines include the following: fire, bomb threats, armed intruder/lock-down, community disaster, civil disturbance, serious injury/illness, severe weather and nuclear emergency. These guidelines are made available to every school site in written form and electronically.

**Threat Assessment Protocol**

A threat assessment strategy and guidelines developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation Critical Incident Response Group have been issued to all schools. Training is mandated twice during the school year for the threat assessment team at each school. Assessments are conducted to evaluate threats as soon as a threat or threatening behavior is reported.

**Critical Incident Response Kits**

All schools have in place information designed to help school personnel, law enforcement and emergency responders be prepared to handle crisis situations. Each school has two (2) up-to-date kits in different locations within the school. Additionally, Gaston County law enforcement and emergency agencies are working toward having school-specific electronic facility/site information available for use in command centers and patrol vehicles in the event of an emergency situation.

### **Metal Detection**

Hand-held metal detectors are in place at all schools. Random metal detection is required at all school sites and monthly reporting of metal detection activities is required.

### **Security Camera Systems**

Digital camera systems have been installed at the majority of our school sites. Camera installation continues as funds are available. For school year 2011-2012, all school bus cameras have been replaced with new digital systems.

### **Staff Deployment Plans**

Staff deployment plans are required and are designed to have teachers and staff assigned to monitor specific areas of the school at designated times, such as school opening, lunch, class changes, school closing and athletic/other special events.

### **Staff and Visitor Identification**

All school employees are issued personnel identification badges. Visitors are required to check in/sign in at the school office. We have required visitor/volunteer guidelines for all schools. Please note valid picture identification is required to check out students.

### **School Locker Security**

All middle and high schools have student lockers. These schools have been directed to develop procedures for the security of all assigned and unassigned lockers.

### **Access Control/Exterior Door Security**

All exterior school building and central office doors other than designated and monitored entrances should be locked or secured from unauthorized entrance from the outside. Schools with multiple buildings are required to address this as a part of their school safety planning.

### **Alternative Education**

Our school district is working to implement student alternative education opportunities in addition to the traditional Warlick Academy placement process. Additional opportunities in process include a 45-day placement and day-reporting placement options at Warlick, utilizing a Governor's Crime Commission Leading, Educating and Preparing (LEAP) Grant at the elementary level and expansion of services to students who are long-term suspended.

### **Student Support Services**

Our school district Student Support Services area works with students, parents, school personnel, law enforcement and other governmental/faith-based/community agencies on the following issues related to school safety: bullying, gang activity in schools, use of illegal drugs/alcohol, general health and mental health related issues, social networking/cyber issues as well as student assignment.

### **Technology/Internet Security**

Our school district has specific guidelines and policy for employee and student use of technology.

### **Staff Training**

The Gaston County Police Educational Services Unit and School Resource Officers provide staff training on security and safety upon request of any school and provide school district training as outlined in

district safety initiatives. In addition, training opportunities on prevention, identification, investigation, law enforcement involvement, counseling and consequences regarding bullying are ongoing from the Student Support Services Area.

### **Campus Crime Stoppers**

Campus Crime Stoppers is in place at all middle and high schools. Crime Stoppers is an anonymous telephone tip line that students can use to report information concerning crimes, drugs or violations of student behavior guidelines. The State has in place an anonymous telephone or web-based tip line (WAVE TIP LINE) for all schools statewide.

### **School Resource Officers (SRO)**

Presently, SROs and/or police officers are assigned to all high schools, middle schools and Warlick Academy. SRO deployment is a cornerstone of our overall school safety plan.

### **Nuclear Emergency Plans**

Gaston County Schools have eight schools located within the evacuation zones for the McGuire or Catawba Nuclear Stations. These schools and our assisting schools have nuclear incident plans.

### **Monthly Safety Report (Monitoring)**

School Principals are required to complete a monthly safety report.

### **Annual School Safety/Emergency Plans (Monitoring)**

In addition to the monthly report, each school principal is responsible for maintaining up-to-date school specific safety and emergency plans and reporting this annually.

### **School Safety Twice Yearly Monitoring**

School principals are required to submit twice yearly reporting on threat assessment training, critical incident response training and kits, semester security audit and progress on school safety training for staff.

### **Hot Line for Emergencies**

1. We have a hot line for facilities and transportation emergencies—24 hours per day; 7 days per week—704-866-6142.
2. School staff may contact either the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education or the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education at their provided contact numbers—24 hours per day; 7 days per week.

### **Walkie Talkies**

Each of our 55 schools has at least 2 walkie-talkies and we add to this inventory as funding permits.

### **Safe Schools Task Force and Executive Committee**

The task force is an advisory body that provides feedback to the Assistant Superintendent regarding safety/security priorities for the school system. This task force also fosters collaboration among the various law enforcement, emergency management agencies and the school system. An executive committee meets more often to function as an advisory group to the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education.