

**STUDENT
CODE OF CONDUCT**

**GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS
2011-2012**

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The basic purpose of the Student Code of Conduct for schools is to help establish and maintain a safe and orderly environment, which must prevail if learning is to take place. The term “school” as it applies to these guidelines refers to all school buildings, parking areas and properties. These rules are in effect at any function or school sponsored activity and while students are waiting for, riding or leaving the bus. These rules apply to any student whose conduct at any time or place has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools. (See policy 4300 for complete policy)

Principals are authorized to establish individual school rules and regulations, in addition to the rules listed below. School administrators have the responsibility to notify law enforcement officers of certain violations of state or federal laws and to call law enforcement officers to assist in the maintenance of order.

It is the intention of The Gaston County Board of Education to enforce these rules fairly, firmly, without discrimination because of race or sex, and with due respect for the constitutional rights of every student. The Student Code of Conduct is the short form of The Gaston County Board of Education’s policy on student control and conduct, suspension and expulsions which is set forth in the Policy Manual of The Gaston County Board of Education. The Policy Manual may be viewed online at www.gaston.k12.nc.us

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RULE 1: Compliance with Directions of Principals, Teachers and Other School Personnel and With School Rules

Students shall comply with the directives of all school personnel at all times while a student is at school.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 5 days OSS.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension.

RULE 2: Disruption of School

A student shall not, by use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance or any other conduct, intentionally cause the disruption or obstruction of any lawful function of the school or classroom while at school.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 5 days OSS.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension.

**RULE 3: Bomb Threats, Communicating a False Bomb Report, or Perpetrating a Bomb Hoax
(Please see policy 4333 for complete policy)**

Students are prohibited from making, aiding and/or abetting in making a bomb threat or perpetrating a bomb hoax against school system property by making a false report that a device designed to cause damage or destruction by explosion, blasting or burning is located on school property.

No student may knowingly or willfully cause, encourage or aid another student to make a bomb threat or perpetrate a bomb hoax. Any student who becomes aware that another student or other person intends to use a bomb, make a bomb threat or perpetrate a bomb hoax must notify a teacher or the principal immediately.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to OSS.	Ranging from OSS to long- term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.	Ranging from OSS to long- term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.

RULE 4: Student Threats (See policy 4331 for complete policy)

Students shall respect other students, visitors, school employees and other persons by utilizing appropriate language and behaviors at all times. Any action which is insulting, threatening, abusive, harassing, profane, obscene or seriously disrespectful, and which disrupts the learning process for any student or which demeans or degrades another person is specifically prohibited. In addition, students who leave threatening notes or post on the Internet threats to other students, faculty or staff will be considered in violation of this rule.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 5 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.

RULE 5: Gangs (See policy 4328 for complete policy)

The Board strives to create a safe, orderly, caring and inviting school environment. Gangs and gang-related activities have proven contrary to that mission and are prohibited within the schools. A gang is any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts, or the purposeful violation of any Gaston County School policy, and having a common name or common identifying sign, colors or symbols. No student shall commit any act that furthers gang or gang-related activities. Additional information on gang activity can be accessed at each school as information on gang-related activities is subject to change. Conduct prohibited by this policy includes:

1. wearing, possessing, using, distributing, displaying or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs or other items with the intent to convey membership or affiliation in a gang;
2. communicating either verbally or non-verbally (gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc.) with the intent to convey membership or affiliation in a gang;
3. tagging, or otherwise defacing school or personal property with symbols or slogans intended to convey membership or affiliation in a gang (see policy 4330, Theft, Trespass and Damage to Property);
4. requiring payment of protection, insurance or otherwise intimidating or threatening any person related to gang activity (see policy 4331, Assaults, Threats and Harassment);
5. inciting others to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person related to gang activity (see policy 4331);
6. soliciting others for gang membership; and
7. committing any other illegal act or other violation of school system policies in connection with gang-related activity.

The Gaston County Schools Board of Education and School Administrators will seek to eliminate gang activity and its detrimental effects on its school campuses. If school officials believe a student’s behavior and/or associations are indicative of gang membership, students and their parent/guardian will be required to sign a “Gang Related Behavior Contract.” Violation of this contract may result in suspension for 10 days and the principal may seek long-term suspension.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to and including long- term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted and may conduct a threat assessment and/or bring criminal charges as may be appropriate.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to and including long- term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted and may conduct a threat assessment and/or bring criminal charges as may be appropriate.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to and including long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted and may conduct a threat assessment and/or bring criminal charges as may be appropriate.

RULE 6: Bullying (See policy 4040 for complete policy)

Students shall not bully or harass other students;

Harassment or bullying behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that:

- (1) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or
- (2) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits.

Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to, verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, lewd propositions, exclusion from peer groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Legitimate age-appropriate techniques are not considered harassment or bullying.

Consequences

Up to 5 days of OSS may be waived if the student shows proof of participation in Mediation/ Counseling from a Mediation Agency.

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to and including long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted and may conduct a threat assessment and/or bring criminal charges as may be appropriate.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to and including long- term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted and may conduct a threat assessment and/or bring criminal charges as may be appropriate.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to and including long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted and may conduct a threat assessment and/or bring criminal charges as may be appropriate.

RULE 7: Student Conspiracy or Plotting to Cause Harm to Other Students or Staff

Students shall be prohibited from conspiring with others or plotting individually regarding harmful acts of violence against other students, faculty or staff. In addition, students are prohibited from violent acts against the property of other students, faculty or staff.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.	Up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.	Up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.

RULE 8: Damage or Destruction of School Property
(Please see policy 4330 and 6440 for complete policy)

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to any school property or private property on school grounds or during a school activity, function or event off school grounds and premises. Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of any minor are liable for damage caused to school property to the extent of \$5,000. (Reference: N.C.G.S. §115C-523)

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted. Restitution may be required.	OSS up to 10 days and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted. Restitution may be required.	OSS up to 10 days and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted. Restitution may be required.

RULE 9: Theft or Damage to Private Property (Please see policy 4330 and 6440 for complete policy)

Students shall not steal, attempt to steal, knowingly be in possession of stolen property, vandalize, intentionally damage, or attempt to damage any school or private property while under school jurisdiction.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law. Restitution may be required.	OSS up to 10 days and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law. Restitution may be required.	OSS up to 10 days and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law. Restitution may be required.

RULE 10: Physical Abuse of a Student/Fighting (See policy 4331 for complete policy)

Students shall not fight or attempt to cause bodily harm to another student. If a student is attempting to involve another student in a fight, the other student should walk away and report it to a teacher, assistant principal or principal. Students who instigate fights or participate in group assaults will be subject to the same consequences as those who are actually involved in fighting. This section does not apply when acting in self defense. Hitting a person back is not self defense; it is retaliation that will be considered fighting.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
In- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.	In- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.	In- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.

**RULE 11: Physical Abuse of School Employees or Other Persons
(See policy 4331 for complete policy)**

Students shall not cause or attempt to cause physical or bodily harm to principals, assistant principals, teachers, substitute teachers, student teachers, teacher assistants, coaches, advisors, counselors, media specialists, bus drivers or monitors or other adults at any time while a student is at school.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.	Up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.	Up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.

**Rule 12: Written or Verbal Abuse of School Employees or Other Adults
(See policy 4331 for complete policy)**

Students shall not, through written or oral communication, threaten to cause, cause or attempt to cause harm to principals, assistant principals, teachers, substitute teachers, student teachers, teacher assistants, coaches, advisors, counselors, media specialists, bus drivers or monitors or other adults at any time while a student is at school or any school sponsored activities.

Consequence

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted.	Up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted.	Up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted.

RULE 13: Weapons and Dangerous Instruments (see Policy 4333 and 5040 for complete policy)

The board will not tolerate the presence of weapons or destructive devices, bombs or terrorist threats, or actions that constitute a clear threat to the safety of students or employees.

Category I

As required by law, a student who brings or possesses a firearm or destructive device on school property or at a school-sponsored event must be suspended for 365 days, unless the superintendent modifies the required 365-day suspension. For this Category a firearm is (1) a weapon, including a starter gun that will, is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, (2) the frame or receiver of any such weapon or (3) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer {G.S. 115C-390.1(b)(6)}.

A destructive device is an explosive, incendiary or poison gas (1) bomb, (2) grenade, (3) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, (4) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, (5) mine or (6) similar device {G.S. 115C-390.1(b)(3)}.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Confiscate weapon. 365-day suspension. Law enforcement will be contacted.	Confiscate weapon. 365-day suspension. Law enforcement will be contacted.	Confiscate weapon. 365-day suspension. Law enforcement will be contacted.

Category II

Other weapons that are prohibited on school property or at a school-sponsored event include: Knives, pocket knives, bowie knives, switchblades, dirks, daggers, slingshots, slungshots, leaded canes, blackjacks, metal knuckles, BB guns, air rifles, air pistols, stun guns and other electric shock weapons such as tasers, icepicks, razors and razor blades (except those designed and used solely for personal shaving), fireworks, and any sharp pointed or edged instrument except unaltered nail files and clips and tools used solely for preparation of food, instruction and maintenance, box cutters and other types of utility blades and blowguns.

A student shall not possess disabling, chemical irritants (including, but not limited to pepper spray) or laser light.

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Confiscate weapon. Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement will be contacted if required by law.	Confiscate weapon. Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS and/or long term suspension. Law enforcement will be contacted if required by law.	Confiscate weapon. Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS and/or long term suspension. Law enforcement will be contacted if required by law.

Rule 14: Substance Abuse and Drug Paraphernalia (Please see policy 4315 and 4325 for complete policy)
(Please see policy 6130 “Administering Medications”)

No student shall possess, use, distribute, sell, possesses with intent to distribute or sell, or conspire or attempt to distribute or sell, or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, anabolic steroid, other controlled substance, any alcoholic beverage, malt beverage, fortified wine, other intoxicating liquor, drug paraphernalia, counterfeit substance, any unauthorized prescription drug, or any other chemicals or products with the intention of bringing about a state of exhilaration, euphoria or of otherwise altering the student’s mood or behavior.

Consequences

POSSESSION

When the violation does not involve the distribution, sale, possession with intent to distribute or sell, or conspiracy or attempt to distribute or sell a substance prohibited by this policy, principals may suspend the student for a period up to ten days OSS or may seek long-term suspension. Up to five days of suspension may be waived if the student shows proof of substance abuse counseling from a substance abuse agency. Law enforcement will be notified for possession of controlled substances in violation of the law.

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

When the violation does involve possession or delivery of a prohibited substance, including the use or being under the influence of a prohibited substance where possession or delivery is involved, principals may suspend a student for a period of five to ten days OSS and may seek long-term suspension. Up to five days of suspension may be waived if the student shows proof of substance abuse counseling from a substance abuse agency. Law enforcement will be notified for possession of controlled substances in violation of the law.

SALE

When the violation includes sale of a prohibited substance including the possession or delivery of a prohibited substance where a sale is involved, the principal may suspend a student for a period of five to ten days OSS and may seek long-term suspension. Law enforcement officials will be informed of this violation.

For the purpose of the Student Code of Conduct the following definitions apply:

1. **Possess:** Having the power or intent to control a prohibited substance and shall include, but is not necessarily limited to the possession of a prohibited substance in a student’s automobile, locker, book-bag, pocket book, desk or on a student’s person.
2. **Use:** The consumption, injection, inhalation or absorption of a prohibited substance into a student’s body by any means.
3. **Under the influence:** The use of any prohibited substance at any time or place when the prohibited substance would influence a student’s mood, behavior or learning to any degree while a student is at school as defined in the introduction to the Student Behavior Guidelines.
4. **Sell:** The exchange of a prohibited substance for money, property, or any other benefit or item of value.
5. **Distribute:** To give, share or pass a prohibited substance
6. **Possess with intent to distribute/sell:** Intent to distribute or sell may be determined from the amount of the prohibited substance found, the manner in which it was packaged, the presence of packaging materials such as scales, baggies or other containers or from statement or actions of the student that demonstrate an intent to distribute or sell.
7. **Counterfeit Substance:** Any substance that is described or presented with the intention of deceiving another into believing that it is a substance prohibited under this policy.
8. **Unauthorized Prescription Drug:** Any drug or medication that has not been prescribed for the student
9. **Drug Paraphernalia:** Means all equipment, products and materials of any kind that are used to facilitate, or intended or designed to facilitate, violations of the controlled substance act. (Reference N.C.G.S. §90-113.21)

Rule 15: Tobacco Policy (Please see policy code 4312 for complete policy)

Students are prohibited from the use and/or possession of tobacco products and shall not possess, smoke, dip, chew or otherwise use any tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes and all lighted and smokeless tobacco products at any time while a student is at school.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Confiscation. Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 1 day OSS.	Confiscation. Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 5 days OSS.	Confiscation. Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS.

RULE 16: Dress Code

The appearance of any young person is primarily the responsibility of that individual and his/her parents. Each student is expected to maintain an appearance that is neither distracting to other students nor disruptive to the educational environment or the safe and healthy climate of schools. Students shall not wear:

Headwear - Hats, bandannas, hair picks, combs or other types of headgear or sunglasses in the building.

Clothing - Clothing that displays sexually explicit words or drawings, profanity, alcohol or drug gang symbols.

No style of clothing or the manner in which it is worn may expose undergarments or create a distraction or disturbance in the educational setting.

The expectations noted above represent the minimum standards established throughout the school system. In addition, items not specifically mentioned may still be deemed inappropriate in a school setting in the judgment of the school administration.

The Board of Education recognizes that local law enforcement agencies may determine that wearing particular gang related attire may present a threat to student safety. The Superintendent will work collaboratively with these agencies to prohibit such dress.

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Superintendent who will make any proposed recommendations for change to the Gaston County Board of Education.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
In-school disciplinary action.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 3 days OSS.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 3 days OSS.

Rule 17: Sexual Harassment (Please see policy code 4360 & 4370 for complete policy)

Sexual harassment means and includes any unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and Any other non-consensual and/or offensive verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature between an employee and a student or between students and includes misconduct by males against females, females against males and between students of the same gender. Sexual harassment is further defined to include two different levels or degrees of misconduct.

Physical - This form of sexual harassment includes touching, fondling and/or grabbing a student in a sexual way without that student’s consent or when the student finds such behavior offensive; and

Verbal - This form of sexual harassment includes: teasing, joking and/or making lewd remarks of a sexual nature to a student without that student’s consent or when the other student finds such behavior offensive.

Sexually harassing students, employees of GCS and any visitors or other individuals while at school is prohibited. Students are further prohibited from retaliating against an employee or student who has filed a sexual harassment complaint or participated in an investigation, proceeding or hearing regarding said complaint.

Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Sexual Harassment

Any student who believes that he/she has been sexually harassed by a school employee or another student should report such behavior immediately to any school official at his/her school (such as an administrator, teacher or school counselor).

Principal must immediately report assaults that result in serious personal injury to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
<p>In- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.</p>	<p>In- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.</p>	<p>In- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.</p>

RULE 18: Use of Wireless Communication Devices (see Policy 4318 for complete policy)

The board recognizes that cellular phones and other wireless communication devices have become an important tool through which parents communicate with their children. Therefore, students are permitted to possess such devices on school property so long as the devices are not activated, used, displayed or visible during the instructional day or as otherwise directed by school rules or school personnel. Wireless communication devices include, but are not limited to, cellular phones, electronic devices with internet capability, paging devices, two-way radios and similar devices. School employees may immediately confiscate any wireless communication devices that are on, used, displayed or visible in violation of this policy. Confiscated devices will be returned only to the student’s parent.

A student’s wireless communication device and its contents, including, but not limited to, text messages and digital photos, may be searched whenever a school official has reason to believe the search will provide evidence that the student has violated or is violating a law, board policy, the Code of Student Conduct or a school rule.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Confiscate device. Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement will be contacted if required by law.	Confiscate device. Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS and/or long term suspension. Law enforcement will be contacted if required by law.	Confiscate device. Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS and/or long term suspension. Law enforcement will be contacted if required by law.

RULE 19: Repeated School Violations

A student who has violated any rules repeatedly as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension.

RULE 20: Responsible Use of School Technology (Please see policy code #3230 for complete policy)

Students shall not violate any policies adopted by the Board of Education regarding student Internet and electronic mail usage or the terms of Gaston County Schools Network and Internet Responsible Use Guidelines (<http://www.gaston.k12.nc.us/district/policies/studentaup.htm>) or individual school policy. Students must not access inappropriate materials on the Internet as may be defined under such Internet policy; should not violate any safety and security rules when using electronic mail, chat rooms, or other forms of electronic communication, as provided under the Internet policy; should not engage in unauthorized access (“hacking”) or other unlawful activities on-line while using school system computer equipment or Internet access; and should not engage in unauthorized disclosure, use and/or dissemination of personal and/or identification information of the Technology Policy.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 5 days OSS. Students may be required to pay restitution.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension. Students may be required to pay restitution.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension. Students may be required to pay restitution.

RULE 21: Organizations and Publications

Any “gang” or secret organization or publication is specifically prohibited on any school premises or in connection with any school-related activities. Distribution of ALL printed material must be approved by the principal, including all student publications such as the student newspaper, yearbook and student magazine.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 5 days OSS.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Repeated violations may result in long-term suspension.

RULE 22: Walkouts and Boycotts

Walkouts or boycotts by a student or group of students, or the urging of others to exercise these tactics, when actions do cause or would reasonably and likely cause a material and substantial disruption of the normal and continuing operation of the educational processes within the school shall not be utilized.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted.	Ranging from in- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted.	Ranging from in- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted.

RULE 23: Trespassing (see policy 4330 for complete policy)

Students shall not willfully enter or remain in any school structure, conveyance or property without having been authorized by school personnel. No student shall be on the campus of another school other than his/her assigned school without the knowledge and consent of the officials of the school being visited, with the exception of athletic activities and other public events.

Any student suspended or expelled from Gaston County Schools will not be allowed on any property of the Gaston County Schools during the period of suspension without the expressed permission of his/her principal. This includes long term and short term suspension and expulsion. Failure to comply with this provision may lead to further disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution for trespass.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in- school disciplinary action up to 1 day OSS.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 3 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted.	Ranging from in-school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted.

RULE 24: Violations of North Carolina Criminal Statutes (See policy 4300 for complete policy)

Students shall not violate any criminal statute or local ordinance or commit any act which could result in criminal prosecution or juvenile proceedings not previously covered elsewhere in these rules at any place or time when the student’s behavior has or is reasonably expected to have a direct and immediate impact on the orderly and efficient operation of the schools or the safety or individuals in the school environment.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from in- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.	Ranging from in- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.	Ranging from in- school disciplinary action up to 10 days OSS and/or long-term suspension. Law enforcement may be contacted if required by law.

RULE 25: Integrity and Civility (See policy 4310 for complete policy)

All students are expected to demonstrate integrity, civility, responsibility and self-control. This expectation is directly related to the board’s educational objectives for students to learn to be responsible for and accept the consequences of their behavior and for students to respect cultural diversity and ideological differences. Integrity, civility, responsibility and self-control also are critical for establishing and maintaining a safe, orderly and inviting environment.

These behaviors are specifically prohibited: cheating, plagiarizing, violating copyright laws, cursing or using vulgar, abusive or demeaning language toward another person, and playing abusive or dangerous tricks or otherwise subjecting a student or an employee to personal indignity.

Consequences

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
Ranging from individual classroom disciplinary action to in-school disciplinary action and/or up to 10 days OSS.	Ranging from individual classroom disciplinary action to in-school disciplinary action and/or up to 10 days OSS.	Ranging from individual classroom disciplinary action to in-school disciplinary action and/or up to 10 days OSS.

Searches and Seizures (Please see policy 4306 and 4318 for complete policy)

To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student lockers, desks, motor vehicles or other school property, and may seize any evidence discovered in the search whereby a student has violated a State law or the policy and/or rules of The Gaston County Board of Education and/or the school attended by the student. Student lockers, desks etc. are school property and may be searched at any time.

A student's wireless communication device and its contents, including, but not limited to, text messages and digital photos, may be searched whenever a school official has reason to believe the search will provide evidence that the student has violated or is violating a law, board policy, the Code of Student Conduct or a school rule.

Random Metal Detection/Automobile Searches

Students may be required to submit to a screening for metal as a condition of entering or continuing attendance at school.

Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege, not of right. The school retains the authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspection of the exteriors of student automobiles on school property. The interiors of student vehicles may be searched whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal or unauthorized materials are contained inside. Such patrols and searches may be conducted without notice, without student consent and without a search warrant.

In addition, random searches of automobiles may be conducted to deter the possession of contraband such as weapons, guns, knives, illegal drugs and alcohol on school property or parking lots owned or leased by the school.

If a search yields evidence that a student has violated a state law or the policy and/or rules of The Gaston County Board of Education and/or the school attended by the student, such evidence shall be seized by school officials and turned over to proper authorities for ultimate disposition.

Recommended Use of Police Canines on School Property

The principal or his/her designee may request a law enforcement agency to use a police canine whenever he/she feels there is reasonable suspicion to conduct a search on school property.

- The principal may honor the request of the sheriff or chief of police to use police canines if the principal feels the request is based on reasonable suspicion.
- The principal may allow police canines to be used anywhere on the school campus, including unoccupied classrooms, athletic facilities and vehicles.
- At no time shall a principal permit the search of a student or employee using a police canine.

Notification of Law Enforcement Officials

Under North Carolina General Statute §115C-288(g) principals must report immediately to law enforcement agencies the following acts that occur on school grounds that involve:

- *assault resulting in serious personal injury
- *sexual assault
- *sexual offense
- *rape
- *kidnapping
- *taking indecent liberties with a minor
- *assaults involving the use of a weapon
- *Possession of a weapon in violation of the law
- *Possession of a firearm in violation of the law
- *Possession of controlled substance in violation of the law

Appeals Procedures**Long-Term Suspensions (See policy 4353 for complete policy)**

1. Parents will be notified by registered mail or in person of the principal's recommendation to the superintendent to long-term suspend the student.
2. Parents shall, within 72 hours, give written notice of appeal to the Hearing Officer for Gaston County Schools. Appeal form is included in the long-term letter from the school.
3. Upon notification of appeal, the Hearing Officer shall convene an appeals committee to hear the appeal, establish a date and time agreeable to the parent and give notification of the appeals hearing date and time to all parties involved.
4. The appeals hearing committee shall allow the school to present a summary report regarding the nature of the offense(s), provide the results of the school's investigation and outline the penalties the principal has recommended. The student and his/her parents will have access to all the information shared with the appeals committee and will be provided opportunity to present evidence.
5. The central office appeals committee, after hearing all the evidence and witnesses, will make a recommendation of their decision to the Superintendent.
6. The Superintendent will make the final decision concerning the appeal. Parents will be notified by letter of the Superintendent's decision.

365-day Suspension (See policy 4353 for complete policy)

A student must be suspended who brings a weapon or explosive device as outlined in Policy 4333 and {G.S. 115C-390.1(b)(3)} and {G.S. 115C-390.1(b)(6)} on school property or on a school sponsored event unless modified by the Superintendent pursuant to policy 4333.

Expulsion (Please see policy 4333 and 4353 for complete policy)

Upon the recommendation of the principal and Superintendent, The Board of Education may expel a student who is fourteen years of age or older if the student's behavior indicates that his or her continued presence in school constitutes a threat to the safety of other students or employees.

The student's conduct need not result in the filing of criminal charges and need not have taken place on school premises or at a school activity in order for expulsion to be considered.

Depending on the circumstances-including the age and maturity of the student, the student's intention in committing the offense and the student's record of conduct – the following conduct may result in expulsion:

1. Theft or attempted theft by a student from another person by using or threatening to use a weapon.
2. The intentional and malicious burning of any structure or personal property, including any vehicle.
3. An attack or threatened attack by a student against another person wherein the student uses a weapon or displays a weapon in a manner found threatening to that person.
4. An attack by a student on any employee, adult volunteer or other student that does not result in serious injury but that is intended to cause or reasonably could cause serious injury.
5. An attack by a student on another person whereby the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury, such as broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injuries, laceration requiring stitches, loss of consciousness, or significant bruising or pain; or whereby the victim requires hospitalization or treatment in a hospital emergency room as a result of the attack.
6. Any intentional, highly reckless or negligent act that results in the death of another person.
7. Confining, restraining or removing another person from one place to another, without the victim's consent or the consent of the victim's parent, for the purpose of committing a felony or for the purpose of holding the victim as a hostage, for ransom, or for use as a shield.
8. The possession of a weapon on any school property, including in a vehicle with the intent to use or transmit for another's use or possession in a reckless manner so that harm is reasonable foreseeable.
9. Taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody or control of another person or persons, by force, threat of force, or violence, or by putting the victim in fear.
10. Any unauthorized and unwanted intentional touching, or attempt to touch, by one person of the sex organ of another, including the breasts of the female and genital areas of the male and female.
11. The possession, manufacture, sale or delivery, or any attempted sale or deliver, of a controlled substance in violation of Chapter 90 of the North Carolina General Statutes.
12. Any behavior resulting in a felony conviction on weapons, drug, assault or other charge that implicates the safety of other persons.
13. Any other behavior that demonstrates a clear threat to the safety of others in the school environment.

Counseling (Please see policy 3600 & 6020 for complete policy)

Following violations of the Student Code of Conduct a student shall cooperate with any interventions recommended by the principal with regards to assessment/evaluations and/or counseling concerning his/her conduct which constituted the violation.

Student Parking (Please see policy 6370 for complete policy)

The parking of motor vehicles and other modes of conveyance on school grounds shall comply with the rules and regulations adopted by the individual school. Failure to abide with such rules and regulations may result in the student's loss of the privilege of parking a vehicle on campus. Student parking is a privilege and all students' motor vehicles on campus may be subject to search by school officials as outlined in policy 4306.

**Suspension from Participation in Athletics and Extracurricular Activities
(Please see policy 4395 & 3610 for complete policy)**

Participation in athletics is a privilege with which come certain responsibilities. A student may be suspended from participation in athletics or extracurricular activities for conduct either on or off school grounds that constitutes a felony or any crime of moral turpitude including, but not limited to, the illegal possession, sale or use of drugs or alcohol. Conviction of a crime is not mandatory for this suspension to be enforced.

Suspension from Attendance at Athletic/Extracurricular Activities and Bus Privileges

A student who exhibits violent or disruptive behavior during the school day(s) may be banned from attending extracurricular activities and riding the school bus at the discretion of the principal.

Use of Videotape Recorders on School Buses

It is the practice of the Gaston County Schools to utilize videotape recorders on school buses. Utilization of such videotape recorders shall be for the purposes of identifying safety concerns and to substantiate bus conduct violations.

Such videotape recordings may be periodically and regularly reviewed by school officials, are considered confidential, but may be disclosed as part of school disciplinary proceedings or safety programs.

The placing of a student on a school bus shall constitute parental consent to have a child videotaped in such a manner.

Student Records (Please see policy 3470 for complete policy)

In accordance with the provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), The Gaston County Board of Education recognizes and adopts the following

- A. The right of a student's parents to inspect and review the student's cumulative record which includes all administration and educational records.
- B. The need to limit disclosure of educational information except in certain circumstances.
- C. The right of a student's parents to seek to correct the cumulative record.
- D. The right of any person to file a complaint with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare if The Gaston County Board of Education violates the FERPA.
- E. The right of the student's parents to be informed of the procedures to be followed in seeking to correct the student's cumulative record. Regulations outlining such procedures are found in the Policy Manual of The Gaston County Board of Education, a copy of which is located in every school.
- F. Gaston County School's Board of Education designates the following as directory information: student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, pictures or videos taken on buses, school grounds, in school buildings and at school activities unless the picture or video may reveal confidential information about a student, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities, and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, grade level, diplomas, certification and awards received and most recent previous school or education institution attended by the student.. Each year the school system will publish a list of what is designated directory information that will be released publicly when the information is requested or needed. Parents, guardians or eligible students may refuse to allow the release of directory information by notifying the school in writing within (10) days of publication of this policy in the Student Code of Conduct.
- G. Pursuant to federal law, names, addresses and telephone listings of secondary school students shall be released to military recruiters and institutions of higher education upon request. Parents or eligible students may request that this information not be released without prior written consent by the parent or eligible student. Annually, parents and eligible students will be notified of the opportunity to make such a request. If the request is made, then the school system shall comply with the request and shall not release the name, address and telephone listing of the student without prior written consent. Parents, guardians or eligible students may make this request by notifying the school in writing within (10) days of publication of this policy in the Student Code of Conduct.
- H. It is the school system's procedure not to require parent permission for students to be photographed, videotaped and/or interviewed by system employees or media on routine school topics and activities for public information, instructional and promotional purposes. Parent permission must be given, however, to photograph videotape and/or interview exceptional children if they will be identified as exceptional children. Parents, guardians, or eligible students may request not to be photographed, videotaped and/or interviewed by notifying the school in writing within (10) days of publication of this policy in the Student Code of Conduct.

GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS REQUIRED ATTENDANCE FOR ALL K-8 STUDENTS
(regardless of student age)
(Please see policy 3480 for complete policy)

Required Attendance:

The school year is 180 days. Students must be in attendance at least 168 days. Only 12 absences, including excused and unexcused absences, are permitted each school year.

Each school shall have a promotion/retention committee that must review information on students who have exceeded twelve absences and will make a recommendation to the principal.

The promotion/retention committee may be the SSMT committee or a principal-designated committee. In order to be recorded present, a student must be present at least one-half of the school day (minimum three instructional hours) or must be at an approved site for the purpose of attending a school-sponsored school activity. Such activities may include: field trips, athletic contests, student conventions or similar activities.

Tardies/Early Leaves:

In order for students to benefit from the instructional day, it is important for students to arrive on time and remain at school for the entirety of the school day. Each school is encouraged to work through the School Improvement Team to implement a plan that encourages minimal tardies and early leaves from the school day.

Reporting Absences

After each absence, excused or unexcused, the principal/principal's designee shall inform the parent/guardian/custodian by the way of a personal or computer-generated telephone message.

Documentation of Absences

Following any absence(s), a student is required to present a written document from the parent or guardian stating the reason for the absence. All absences will be coded unexcused in the computer until a written note is received from the parent or guardian.

Written documentation must be presented within two school days after the student returns to school; otherwise, the absence(s) will be recorded as unexcused. In particular situations that may involve court related proceedings, Gaston County social workers are given the authority to review attendance documentation as necessary. Absences will be coded according the North Carolina State regulations as printed below.

The following reasons can be accepted by school principals as valid excuses for school absences:

- 1. Illness or Injury**
- 2. Death in the Immediate Family**
- 3. Medical or Dental Appointments**
- 4. Court of Administrative Proceedings**
- 5. Religious Observances-** A student may be absent a minimum of two days each academic year for observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent(s).
- 6. Educational Opportunity-** An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity. Approval for such an absence must be gained prior to the absence. The form entitled "Request for Excused Absence for Educational Opportunity" may be obtained from individual school.
- 7. Quarantine** An absence is excused when isolation of the child is ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health.
- 8. Special Emergencies –** As determined by the principal.
- 9. Short-term Suspension**

- 10. Absence due to pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary as required by G.S. 115C-375.5.**
- 11. A student whose parent or legal guardian (a) is active duty member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4176, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted additional excused absences at the discretion of the superintendent or designee to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian as required by G.S. 115C-407.5.**

When a student reaches ten or more cumulative absences, a letter may be sent requiring a doctor's note to excuse future absences. This can be determined by individual circumstances.

Make-Up Work

Students must have an opportunity to make up work or tests missed for those periods for which an absence occurs. Upon the student's return to school, arrangements for make-up for excused or unexcused absences shall be made within three (3) school days. Due dates for make-up work will be at the discretion of the teacher. Students attending a school-sponsored function will not be counted absent. However, these students will be held responsible for making up work missed within three (3) school days. Any exception must be approved by the principal. The emphasis in make-up should be on mastery of knowledge and skills rather than upon literal make-up of the hours missed.

Cumulative Absence Notification

Prior to six (6) cumulative absences of any type the principal shall notify the parent/guardian by mail for the purpose of sharing information regarding the Gaston County Schools attendance policy.

Individual School Procedures

Each elementary and middle school will develop procedures to implement the above policy. Each school will also develop a package of incentives and/or consequences related to improvements in school attendance.

School System Incentives

The school system, through the Business Partnerships Office, will cultivate and develop incentives for excellent and improved student attendance.

Possible Upcoming Policy Revisions

Student attendance is a priority for Gaston County Schools. Therefore, a standing committee of parents, students, teachers, administrators and support staff will periodically review student attendance data, trends and formulate suggested revisions to the student attendance policy of the school system. All policy suggestions should be completed and sent to the Superintendent for consideration by the end of February of each year.

High School Student Attendance
Grades 9-12

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE - STUDENTS 7-16 YEARS OF AGE
(Please see policy code #3480 for complete policy)

The public school laws of North Carolina require compulsory attendance for all children between the ages of seven and sixteen years (N.C.G.S. §115C-378). Every parent, guardian or other person having charge or control of such a child enrolled in the Gaston County Schools is charged by law to cause the child to attend school continuously for a period equal to the time when the public school is in session. Failure to comply with the Attendance Law by having excessive absences may result in referral to truancy mediation, district court (parent) or juvenile court (child). If a parent, guardian or custodian is found guilty of violating the Compulsory Attendance Law, they may be ordered by the Court to do community service, fined or be incarcerated.

- A. If a student has accumulated **three (3) unexcused absences in a school year**, the law **requires** the principal or designee to notify the parent/guardian of the student's excessive absences from school.
- B. The following reasons can be accepted by school principals as valid excuses for school absences:
1. **Illness or Injury-** An absence is excused when the absence results from illness or injury which prevents the child from being physically able to attend school.
 2. **Death In The Immediate Family-** An absence is excused when it results from the death of a member of the immediate family of the child. For purposes of this regulation, the immediate family of a child includes, but is not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters.
 3. **Medical or Dental Appointments-** An absence is excused when it results from a medical or dental appointment of a child, and approval of the appropriate school official is gained prior to the absence, except in the case of an emergency.
 4. **Court of Administrative Proceedings-** An absence is excused when it results from the attendance of a child at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the child is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
 5. **Religious Observances-** A student may be absent a minimum of two days each academic year for observance of an event required or suggested by the religion of the student or the student's parent(s).
 6. **Educational Opportunity-** An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity. Approval for such an absence must be gained prior to the absence. The form entitled "Request for Excused Absence for Educational Opportunity" may be obtained from individual school.
 7. **Quarantine-** An absence is excused when isolation of the child is ordered by the local health officer or by the State Board of Health.
 8. **Special Emergencies-** as determined by the principal.
 9. **Short-term Suspension.**
 10. Absence due to pregnancy and related conditions or parenting, when medically necessary as required by G.S. 115C-375.5.
 11. Job Shadows and other work based learning opportunities, as described in G.S. 115C-47(34a).
 12. **A student whose parent or legal guardian (a) is active duty member of the uniformed services as defined by policy 4176, Children of Military Families, and (b) has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting will be granted additional excused absences at the discretion of the superintendent or designee to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian as required by G.S. 115C-407.5.**

- C. After not more than six unexcused absences**, the principal shall notify the parent, guardian or custodian by mail that he/she may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the established attendance policy of the state and local board of education.
- D.** A copy of the notice of absences will be sent to the school social worker who will contact the student and family in an effort to assist them in solving the attendance problem.
- E. After a student has accumulated ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year**, the principal/principal's designee shall review any report or investigation concerning the unexcused absence and shall confer with the student and his/her parent/guardian/custodian to determine whether the parent/guardian/custodian has received the required notification and made a good faith effort to comply with the Compulsory Attendance Law. If the principal/principal's designee determines the parent/guardian/custodian has not made a good faith effort to comply with the law, the principal/principal's designee shall notify the school social worker, who shall notify the district attorney unless the case has already been initiated in the courts. Services of the social worker are available to assist in the initiation of court proceedings. If the principal/principal's designee determines the parent/guardian/custodian has made a good faith effort, the principal/principal's designee or the school social worker may file a complaint with the juvenile intake counselor that the student is habitually absent from school without a valid excuse.
- F.** All teachers are required to report attendance each day and maintain accurate attendance records. Report cards will accurately reflect the student's attendance record.

**GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS REQUIRED ATTENDANCE FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
(regardless of student age)****Required Daily School Attendance**

After each full day absence whether excused or unexcused, the school will attempt to contact the parent or guardian using personal staff contact or automated telephone/email contact.

Students in grades nine through twelve (9-12) are expected to be in each class each day of the semester. Upon the student's third (3rd), sixth (6th) and tenth (10th) full day absences, the school will notify the parent or guardian of the violations of the high school attendance policy (as is consistent with State Policy for students under 16 years of age).

Class attendance is essential to high student achievement. Attendance in school and participation in class are integral parts of academic achievement and the teaching and learning process. With this in mind, all students are expected to be in attendance each day school is in session. In order to be recorded present for daily attendance, a student must be present at least one-half of the school day or at a place other than the school with the approval of the appropriate school official for the purpose of attending an authorized school activity. For the purpose of class attendance, **a student must be present for at least 75 minutes of a ninety-minute period.**

Required Class Period Attendance, Interventions and Course Credit

For class period attendance, at least by the student's third absence in a course, where no contact has been received from the parent or guardian, the classroom teacher will contact the parent or guardian as an intervention. Also, after not more than six (6) absences in a course, where no contact has been received from the parent or guardian, the classroom teacher will notify the parent/guardian and the school's Student Services Management Team (SSMT). The SSMT will consult the school social worker and/or other support personnel for possible additional interventions/recommendations/consequences for the student/parent/guardian. On the tenth (10th) absence in a course, the classroom teacher will contact the parent/guardian.

At the eleventh (11th) absence (excused or unexcused) per semester from a class, students who are passing the class must file for an appeal in order to be eligible to earn credit for the class. The appeal will be requested to the designated official at each high school (appointed by the principal). The appeal may be requested by the student or parent, classroom teacher, advisory teacher, counselor or other staff member. The deadline for an appeal request is the 75th school day of each semester (unless the 11th absence falls after this day). Each high school principal will appoint an attendance appeal committee(s) as deemed appropriate (possibly per grade level or per academy). Guidelines from the school system will be provided to the principals and these committees. The committee(s) will meet to conduct student attendance appeals during a period between the 76th school day of each semester and the last teacher workday of each semester.

In the event the student appeal is granted, the student will receive the final grade earned in the course. Should the appeal be rejected, the student will receive a failing final grade and receive no credit for the course.

Requirements for class period attendance:

- Each day school is in session for students classroom teachers will report student attendance for each class period and maintain accurate student attendance records for report cards.
- By the third (3rd) absence in a course where no contact has been received from the

parent/guardian, the classroom teacher will contact the parent/guardian using telephone, email, letter or automated telephone message. The classroom teacher will remind the parent/guardian of the number of absences and The Gaston County Board of Education Policy on high school student attendance.

- After not more than six (6) absences in a course, the classroom teacher will contact the parent/guardian using telephone, email, letter or automated telephone message. The classroom teacher will remind the parent/guardian of the number of absences, the Policy on high school student attendance and specifics regarding the appeal process.
- After not more than six (6) absences in a course, the classroom teacher will notify the school's Student Services Management Team (SSMT).
- Upon notification from the classroom teacher, the SSMT will evaluate the overall academic and attendance information of the student and if deemed appropriate, consult with the school social worker and/or other support personnel for possible additional interventions, recommendations or consequences for the student/parent/guardian.
- On the tenth (10th) absence in a course, the classroom teacher will contact the parent/guardian using telephone, email, letter or automated telephone message. The classroom teacher will remind the parent/guardian of the number of absences, the Policy on high school student attendance and that an appeal must be initiated upon the eleventh (11th) absence from a course if the student is passing the course.
- On the eleventh (11th) absence, the classroom teacher or other school personnel, student or parent can give/request the Gaston County Schools' student attendance appeal request form.

Documentation of Absences

Following any absence(s), a student is required to present a written document from the parent or guardian stating the reason for the absence. All absences will be coded unexcused in the computer until a written note is received from the parent or guardian. Written documentation must be presented within two (2) school days after the student returns to school; otherwise, the absence(s) will be recorded as unexcused. After the tenth absence, a student may be required to furnish doctor notes to excuse future absences. Absences will be coded according to North Carolina State Regulations as printed in paragraph B of the Compulsory Attendance section above.

Make-up Work

Students with excused and unexcused absences are required to make up missed work. Make up work is the responsibility of the student to initiate and complete outside of the regular class period. Upon the student's return to school, the student has two (2) school days to arrange for make up work with each of his/her teachers for which a class was missed. Work missed must be completed as directed by each teacher within seven (7) school days from the student's return to school.

School-related Functions

Students attending a school-related function will not be counted absent. School related functions are school field trips, school-initiated and scheduled activities and athletic events requiring early dismissal from school. These students will be held responsible for making up work missed. The teacher will determine when work is to be made up. The student is responsible for finding out what assignments are due and completing them within the specified time period.

Reporting Attendance

All teachers and attendance personnel are required to report attendance each class period and each day to maintain accurate attendance records. Daily attendance data is managed by teachers and school support personnel and is reported at the top of each report card. Class attendance for course credit is reported and maintained by each classroom teacher each period of the school day and is reported by class within the body of each report card. Therefore, it is important for parents and students to note both daily and class period attendance. Class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process and may be taken into account in assessing academic achievement.

Individual High School Procedures

Each high school will develop proper procedures to implement the above policy. Each high school will also develop a package of incentives and/or consequences for improvements in student attendance. These incentives and/or consequences will include student parking privileges and may include other activities and events such as attendance or costs for the annual school prom.

School System Incentives

The school system, through the Business Partnerships Office, will cultivate and develop incentives for excellent and improved student attendance.

Possible Upcoming Policy Revisions

Student attendance is a priority for Gaston County Schools. Therefore, a standing committee of parents, students, teachers, administrators and support staff will periodically review student attendance data, trends and formulate suggested revisions to the student attendance policy of the school system. All policy suggestions should be completed and sent to the Superintendent for consideration by the end of February of each year.

North Carolina High School Athletic Association Attendance Requirements

- (a) A player must have been in attendance for at least 85 percent of the previous semester at an approved high school. Any student must be in membership to be able to make up days missed while in membership (days missed while not in membership may not be made up for athletic eligibility). For a regular 90-day semester, a student may not miss more than 13 days and be in compliance with the 85 percent rule.
- (b) A student must, at the time of any game in which he or she participates, be a regularly enrolled member of the school's student body, according to local policy. If there is no local policy, 'regularly enrolled' is defined as enrolled for a least one -half of the 'minimum load.' It is recommended the student be in school the day of the contest.
- (c) The student must be enrolled within the first 15 days and in regular attendance for the present semester to be eligible for athletics. A student whose family has moved into a school district shall immediately assume the same status in the new district as that from which he moved. Summer school attendance shall not be counted in determining percentage of attendance for athletic eligibility, but approved homebound programs do fulfill the attendance requirement.
- (d) At the end of each semester, any participant who has failed to attend school 85 percent of that semester is immediately ineligible.

Quoted from page 115 of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Handbook, 2010-2011 Edition.

Driver Education and Student Attendance

Students will be allowed to enroll in driver education only if they meet a minimum of 94% attendance in the year (if in middle school) or 94% attendance the semester (if in high school) before enrolling in driver education. Students must have been in attendance 168 days of the 180 day school year (for middle school) or 84 days of the 90 day semester (for high school) in the year or semester before enrollment in driver education with Gaston County Schools (medical exceptions considered).

Dropout Prevention/Driver’s License Legislation

North Carolina has legislation reflecting a coordinated statewide effort to motivate and encourage students to complete their high school education. The law provides for the revocation of the student’s driving permit or license if the student does not maintain adequate academic progress or drops out of school. Adequate academic progress is defined as passing five (5) subjects under a traditional schedule (6 or 7 period day) or 3 out of 4 classes in a block schedule school. This law applies to all North Carolina students under the age of 18 who are eligible for a driving permit or license. Previously a student had to present a birth certificate, social security card and Driver Education Completion Certificate to the Department of Motor Vehicles in order to obtain a permit or license. A student is required to present a Driving Eligibility Certificate, issued by the school and good for 30 days, to the Department of Motor Vehicles to obtain a permit or license. The Driving Eligibility Certificate will only be issued to students making adequate academic progress. Students who do not meet the academic progress requirements will be reported to the Department of Motor Vehicles and their permit or license will be revoked. There is a provision for a request for a review of the student’s situation based on hardship considerations. Students may regain academic eligibility at the end of each semester

Lose Control, Lose Your License Legislation

Students given an expulsion/suspension for more than 10 (ten) consecutive days for one of the three reasons listed below are subject to having their permit/license suspended for up to one calendar year.

- The possession or sale of an alcoholic beverage or an illegal controlled substance on school property.
- The possession or use on school property of a weapon or firearm that resulted in disciplinary action under G.S. §115C-391(d1) or that could have resulted in that disciplinary action if the conduct had occurred in a public school.
- The physical assault on a teacher or other personnel on school property.

Students who are at least 14 years old or who are rising 8th graders are subject to this law. The law applies to all students, even to those exempted under Dropout Prevention/Driver’s License Legislation. Unlike the Dropout Prevention/Driver’s License Legislation law that ends when a student turns 18 years old, the “Lose Control” law does not stop at age 18 nor does it stop when the student graduates.

Students who may lose their permit/license under this legislation may be eligible to regain the permit/license after a six-month period by displaying exemplary behavior in an alternative education setting or having successfully completed a school district approved drug or alcohol treatment counseling program.

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