

## VI. STUDENTS

### 6.1 *Admissions and Attendance*

6.1.1 Compulsory Attendance and Entrance Age: All persons between the age of seven and seventeen years of age are required by state law to attend school for the minimum number of scholastic days prescribed by the State Board of Education unless the person holds a certificate of exemption issued by the Superintendent or is otherwise exempt under state law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-28-3 (1975)]

*a. Kindergarten Age Requirement –*

1. A child five years of age on or before September 1 shall be entitled to admission to kindergarten at the opening of that school year or as soon as practicable thereafter.
2. A child less than five years of age on September 1 shall not be entitled to admission during that school year.
3. An underage child transferring from the public school kindergarten in another state, and whose parents were residing in that state at the time of the transfer, may be admitted to kindergarten on a space available basis with Board approval. The child shall be admitted to first grade upon successful completion of kindergarten.

*b. Kindergarten and First Grade Age Requirement –*

1. A child six years of age on or before December 31 shall be entitled to admission to first grade at the opening of school for that school year or as soon as practicable thereafter.
2. A child under six years of age on December 31 shall not be entitled to admission to the first grade during that school year.
3. An underage child who has moved into this state having successfully completed a mandated, public school kindergarten program in another state shall be admitted to first grade.
4. Kindergarten or first grade students who were enrolled in an Alabama private school, church school, or were being tutored in accordance with the Ala. Code (1975) and who seek admission to kindergarten or first grade in the public schools must meet the age requirements for admittance.

6.1.2 Admission to Schools:

- a. Resident Students –* School-age children who reside within the municipal limits of the City of Gulf Shores, Alabama, may be admitted to Gulf Shores City Schools.

The school principal shall determine grade placement of students from a private or non-public school or from home education based on state regulations and applicable Gulf Shores City Board of Education rules regarding transfer of credit as well as other factors including test data, age, and previous school records.

Admission may be denied a student who is over seventeen (17) years of age and who has been dismissed from previous schools for violation of the rules of the school with the exception of resident students who have current Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

When a student facing some type of disciplinary action is withdrawn from school prior to receiving the punishment, said student (and his/her parent/legal guardian) is to be informed that prior to admission/readmission to any Gulf Shores City school, the disciplinary action assigned must be completed. This includes any suspension, alternative program placement, work assignment, or referral to the Superintendent or board for a hearing.

- b. *Non-resident Students* – The Board may authorize the enrollment of nonresident students under the following conditions:

**TBD**

- c. *Homeless Students* –

1. Homeless students will be permitted to enroll without regard to residency status and will not be denied services offered to other students in the school system. Homeless students may also be entitled to other accommodations under federal law.
2. Homeless students will continue in the school they attended before becoming homeless for the duration of their homelessness, or for the remainder of the academic year, if the student becomes permanently housed during an academic year. Otherwise, a homeless student may be enrolled in any school in the system that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is living are eligible to attend.
3. When a dispute arises regarding school placement, the system will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, pending resolution of the dispute. The school will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the decision, a statement of the right to appeal, and the procedure for appealing the placement decision. The principal of the school will notify the Board's Homeless Liaison of the

- dispute.
4. The Homeless Liaison will expeditiously carry out the system's dispute resolution procedures as detailed in the Board's Homeless Student Plan. The plan is available in the district's Central Office and in the principal's office of each school.
    - i. *Placement of Students* – The Board will determine the placement of newly enrolled students in accordance with state law.
    - ii. *Documentation* – Students entering the school system for the first time, regardless of grade level, are not required to submit a birth certificate or another form of acceptable documentation to verify the student's age. A social security number may be requested, but such request is voluntary and is not a requirement of enrollment.
- d. *Students in Foster Care* –
1. A student in foster care remains in his or her school of origin, unless it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in the student's best interest.
  2. If it is not in the student's best interest to stay in his or her school of origin, the student is immediately enrolled in the new school even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment.
  3. The new (enrolling) school should immediately contact the school of origin to obtain relevant academic and other records.
- e. *Transfers From Accredited, Non-Accredited, Or Home Schools* –
1. Students transferring from accredited public or non-public schools will have all credits and current class/grade placement accepted upon receipt of the official transcript(s) without validation.
  2. To allow transfer of credits and/or determine the appropriate class/grade placement of a student transferring to this system from a non-accredited or home school, the following shall be implemented:
    - Credit for all elective courses shall be accepted without validation.
    - Credit for core courses of English, mathematics, science and social studies shall be transferred as follows: end-of-course tests, nationally recognized standardized tests, and official school records shall be used to validate credit earned and to determine the most appropriate course and grade placement.

3. For any initial core course the student completes successfully in this system, he/she shall be permitted to transfer in that subject area all previous credits earned at a non- accredited or home school. (Example: Successful completion of eleventh grade English in this system would allow the student to transfer ninth and tenth grade English if completed successfully at the non-accredited or home school.)
4. In the event of the existence of controversial records/transcripts and/or the absence of any official or notarized records/transcripts, the student shall take placement tests consisting of the Gulf Shores City School's previous semester tests for core courses.
5. All transfer students must pass any required assessments and meet all other requirements for graduation.

Reference(s): ALA CODE 16-11-9, ALA ADMIN CODE §290-3-1-.02(7) J 2 (K)

6.1.3 Absences and Excuses: Students are not permitted to be absent from school without a valid excuse. Absences will be designated as excused or unexcused. Excused absences will be permitted for the following reasons:

- a. Illness
- b. Inclement weather
- c. Legal quarantine
- d. Death in immediate family
- e. Emergency
- f. Permission of principal and consent of parent
- g. Religious holidays

Documentation supporting an excused absence must be submitted within three days of the absence or the absence will be deemed to be unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences (3 or more) may result in referral of the matter to juvenile or other appropriate legal authorities for investigation.

6.1.4 Recording Absences: Teachers and school office personnel will keep records of students' daily attendance as required by state law. The student information system will be used to record absences, tardies, check ins/outs, and suspensions.

A student is absence if he/she:

1. Misses more that one-half of the instructional day (3.5+ hours)
2. Arrives to school after 11:30
3. Leaves school before 11:30 and does not return the same day
4. Any high school student

6.1.5 Truancy: Parents or guardians are required to ensure that students under their care, custody, or control attend school regularly. Habitual or excessive absence from school may require Board officials to refer the matter to juvenile authorities or to initiate

truancy proceedings.

- 6.1.6 Transportation: Student transportation may be made available to residents of the City of Gulf Shores in accordance with routes and schedules developed by the Board's transportation department. Such schedules and routes may be modified or eliminated at the discretion of the Superintendent and/or designee as the needs and resources of the district dictate.

[Reference: ALA. CODE 16-28-1, *et. seq.* (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02]

## 6.2 Student Fees, Fines, and Charges

Reasonable fees, fines, and charges not prohibited by law may be established by the Superintendent. All such fee, fines, and charges will be collected and accounted for in accordance with the procedures, rules, and regulations to be developed by the Chief School Financial Officer or as provided in the [GS Policy Manual: Section 3 Financial Management](#).

## 6.3 Extracurricular Activities

- 6.3.1 General: The Board supports, to the extent reasonably possible, student participation in extracurricular activities.

Students may be offered an opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and student organizations. Extracurricular activities must meet the following criteria:

- a. The organization or activity must be approved by the school principal and must have an assigned faculty supervisor or sponsor;
- b. The organization or activity must promote or serve the intellectual, cultural, personal, or physical development of the student in a manner that is consistent with the purposes of public education, the Board's legal mandate, mission statement, policies, and regulations, and with applicable requirements of state and federal law.
- c. The organization or activity must operate under and be subject to general supervision of school officials; and
- d. The nature of the organization and its activities are not inconsistent with and do not interfere with instructional activities or requirements.

Student participation or membership in such organization or activities may be governed by the specific policies of the organization and is subject to view and approval by the principal.

- 6.3.2 Athletics: Participation in Board sanctioned athletic programs will be on such terms and conditions as may be approved by the Board and requirements of any athletic association of which the Board or the applicable local school is a member. Schools may establish terms and conditions for participation in such programs as long as school eligibility criteria are not inconsistent with system- wide eligibility or participation criteria, rules,

regulations, or standards established by any athletic association or organization of which the Board or the applicable local school is a member, or any rule, principle or provision of applicable law.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02 (19)]

#### **6.4 Off-Campus Events**

Students participation in and travel to off-campus events, concerts, functions, and activities, and the use of school buses or other transportation for such purposes may be authorized under and subject to the following terms and conditions:

- A. The destination is an activity, event, or function that services a bona fide educational or related extracurricular purpose, or is an athletic event or function sponsored or sanctioned by the school or the school system;
- B. Adequate information regarding the trip (e.g., destination, duration, purpose, educational purpose, mode of transportation, nature and extent of student participation) has been provided to the principal, program director, and Superintendent and/or designee;
- C. Adequate arrangements are made for supervision and other risk-management considerations (e.g., parental permission, medical treatment authorization, special insurance requirements);
- D. Properly certified and licensed drivers have been selected and arrangements for the costs of the trip (e.g., salary, fuel, maintenance, lodging) have been made;
- E. Approval of the trip in accordance with administrative procedures is obtained; and
- F. The selection of chaperones to accompany students on trips or off-campus activities is at the sole discretion of school officials.

The Superintendent is authorized to develop additional specific requirements for participation in and travel to and from official events and activities that are consistent with the terms of this policy.

#### **6.5 Equal Educational Opportunities**

In compliance/alignment with the Equal Opportunities Act of 1974, no student will be unlawfully excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any program or activity offered or sponsored by the Board on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, disability, creed, national origin, sex, immigrant or migrant status, non-English speaking ability, or homeless status.

#### **6.6 Title IX**

- 6.6.1 Prohibition: In accordance with Title IX (20 U.S.C. 1681, *et seq.*), the Board strictly prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in its programs or activities, including sexual harassment, as defined by law and Board policy. Sexual harassment complaints should be filed and reviewed, adhering to the sexual harassment guidelines identified in the GSCS Policy 6.7: Student Sexual Harassment. All other complaints under Title IX will be filed and reviewed according to the Board's general complaint and grievance procedures which are identified in GSCS Policy 6.26.
- 6.6.2 Title IX Coordinator: The Superintendent is authorized and directed to designate a Title IX Coordinator, whose duties will included but not be limited to receiving and responding to Title IX inquiries and complaints.

## 6.7 Student Sexual Harassment

- 6.7.1 Sexual Harassment Prohibited: Sexual harassment in any form that is directed toward students is prohibited. Persons who violate the policy will be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences up to and including termination (for employees) and expulsion (for students) as dictated by the nature and severity of the violation and other relevant considerations. If appropriate, the circumstances constituting the violation may be reported to law enforcement agencies or child welfare agencies for further investigation and action.
- 6.7.2 Definition: For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other physical or verbal conduct or communications of a sexual nature, and any other gender-based harassment, whether initiated by students, school employees, or third parties, when:
- a. Submission to the conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the student's education, including any aspect of the student's participation in school-sponsored activities, or any other aspect of the student's education.
  - b. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting the student's academic performance, participation in school-sponsored activities, or any other aspect of the student's education;
  - c. The conduct has the purpose and effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance or participation in school-sponsored activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education environment.

The following are examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment, depending on the circumstances:

1. Verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature, including graphic comments, the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, and sexual propositions;
2. Repeated unwelcome solicitations of sexual activity or sexual contact;

3. Unwelcome inappropriate sexual touching;
4. Demands for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats with regard to the student's educational status.

6.7.3 Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures: Established sexual harassment complaint procedures provide students who believe that they are victims of unlawful sexual harassment with a thorough, discreet, and prompt internal procedure for investigating and resolving sexual harassment complaints. The procedures facilitate the gathering of relevant facts and evidence, permit timely assessment of the merits of the complaint, provide an opportunity for informal resolution of complaint where appropriate, eliminate any harassment that is established by the investigation, and prevent any retaliation based upon the filing of the complaint. The procedures reflect due regard for the legal rights and interest of all persons involved in the complaint, and will be explained, and implemented so as to be understandable and accessible to all student population groups and ages.

6.7.4 Initial Confrontation of Accused Harasser Not Required: A student who invokes the harassment complaint procedure will not be required to present the complaint to the accused or suspected harasser for resolution. Students will be permitted to report allegations of suspected harassment to any appropriate Board administrator, teacher, counselor, or employee, and such persons have a duty to promptly refer such allegations to the Superintendent or to take such action as may be required by the procedures established under "Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures Authorized" (6.7.3) above. In no case will any employee who is the subject of a complaint be permitted to conduct, review, or otherwise exercise decision-making responsibility in connection with the processing of the complaint.

6.7.5 Notice of Policy to be Promulgated: The Superintendent will promulgate and disseminate this policy and the complaint procedures to the schools and will take such other steps and measures as may be reasonably available and expedient for informing the school community of the conduct prohibited by this policy and the recourse available to students who believe that they have been subjected to sexual harassment.

## 6.8 Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

6.8.1 Consent: The Board will obtain parental consent before students are required to participate in a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED):

- a. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent(s);
- b. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;



- c. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
- d. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- e. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationship,
- f. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
- g. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent(s); or
- h. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

6.8.2 Notice and Option to Opt Out: Parents will be provided notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of any of the following:

- a. Any survey that is designated to obtain protected information from a student, regardless of the source of funding;
- b. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening that is required as a condition of attendance, that is administered by the school or its agent, and that is not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; and
- c. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or for the purpose of selling or otherwise distributing the information to others.

6.8.3 Inspection: Parents will be allowed to inspect, upon request and before administration or use, the following:

- a. Protected information surveys of students;
- b. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
- c. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

6.8.4 Special Provisions for Certain Students: Students who are at least 18 years old and emancipated minors under state law will be allowed to take the above actions described in sections 6.81, 6.82, and 6.83 in lieu of their parents or guardians.

6.8.5 Additional Policies and Procedures Authorized: In consultation with parents, the Superintendent is authorized to develop additional policies and arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Board will directly notify parents of these policies and procedures at the beginning of each school year and after any substantive changes are approved. (Reference: 20 U.S.C. 1232h; 34 CFR Part 98)

With the exception of directory information as defined below in Section 6.9, personally identifiable information will not be released by the school system from an education

record without prior written consent of the parent or eligible student except where authorized by federal law. These circumstances include but are not limited to:

- a. Disclosures will be made to school administrators, teachers, or other professionals employed or associated by the school system who have some role in evaluating or educating the student.
- b. Records will be sent to a school where the student has enrolled upon request of the institution.
- c. Disclosures will be made to federal or state officials in connection with the audit of educational programs.
- d. Disclosures will be made in connection with financial aid applications of the student to determine the eligibility for and amount of aid as well as enforcement of the terms and conditions of financial aid.
- e. Disclosures will be made to comply with state law, IRS laws and regulations, judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas. Unless otherwise required by a judicial order or federal grand jury subpoena, a reasonable effort will be made to notify parents or students in advance of such disclosures.
- f. Disclosures will be made to organizations conducting studies on behalf of or by educational institutions for the purpose of developing, validating, or administering predictive tests, administering student aid programs and improving instruction.
- g. Disclosures will be made in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- h. Disclosures will be made to the Attorney General of the United States or to his or her designee in response to an ex parte order in connection with the investigation or prosecution of terrorism crimes specified in 18 U.S.C. 2332(b)(5)(B) and 2331.

Each records custodian in the school district shall maintain a record of each request for access to and each disclosure of personally identifiable information from the educational records of a student in accordance with regulations governing the Act.

A parent or eligible student who believes his or her record contains an error may request its correction by submitting a written explanation of the error and the basis for believing it to be an error to the principal or his or her designee, who shall investigate and determine whether or not to amend the record. If the matter cannot be thus resolved, a parent or eligible student may request a hearing pursuant to federal regulations at 34 C.F.R. 99.21-00.22 as well as applicable state regulations. If the hearing results in a determination that the record contained erroneous information, it shall be corrected and the parent or eligible student shall be informed in writing of the correction. If the information contained in the record is determined not to be erroneous, the parent may place a statement in the record commenting upon the contested information and stating the basis for disagreement. The statement shall thereafter be disclosed whenever the portion to which it relates is disclosed.

#### 6.8.6 Voluntary Religious Expression: Subject to the requirements and prohibitions of

Amendments 1 and 14 to the United States Constitution, it is the policy of this Board that:

- a. There shall be no discrimination against students or parents on the basis of their religious viewpoint or the religious content of their expression.
- b. Students shall be allowed to express their beliefs about religion in homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free from discrimination based on the religious content of those submissions. Homework and classwork assignments shall be reviewed by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance, and against other legitimate pedagogical concerns, but may not be penalized or rewarded based on the religious content of the work.
- c. Students may pray or engage in religious activities or religious expression before, during, and after the school day in the same manner and to the same extent that students may engage in nonreligious activities or expression.
- d. Students may wear clothing, accessories, and jewelry which display religious messages or symbols in the same manner and to the same extent that students are permitted to wear other types of clothing, accessories, and jewelry that contain messages or symbols.
- e. The Board shall not take any actions which establish a religion or prohibit the free exercise of a particular religion.
- f. The Board retains the authority to protect the safety of its students, employees, and visitors, and to maintain order and discipline in its schools and on its properties in a content and viewpoint neutral manner.  
[Reference: 20 U.S.C. §1232h; 34 CFR Part 98]  
[Reference: Alabama Code § 16-1-20.5]

## 6.9 Student Records

Educational records as defined by law or Board policy will be available for examination and review by authorized persons in the manner prescribed and to the extent required by the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)**. Except where the context requires otherwise, the term “education records” has the meaning given in 20 U.S.C. 1232 g(a)(4). Copies of such records may likewise be provided to the extent required and under circumstances specified by applicable law or regulation. **Established administrative standards and procedures respecting access to such records, including a schedule of reasonable charges for the reproduction thereof, will be provided annually through the student handbook or by other appropriate means.** (Reference: 20 U.S.C. 1232g(a)(4); 34 C. FR 99.3)

**It is the policy of the BOE that all employees shall comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Student Data Privacy, and the Pupil Protection Rights Amendment (PPRA). For the purposes of this policy, a “parent” is defined as a natural parent, a guardian, or any individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. An “eligible student” is defined as a student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education. The Board has developed and adopted student privacy policies in consultation with parents in accordance with state and federal law.**

Additionally, parents will be directly notified of these policies at least annually via the Student/Parent Handbook issued to students at the beginning of the year or at the student's time of enrollment.

The Superintendent shall implement procedures whereby every principal is directed to develop a means to notify, on an annual basis, parents and eligible students, including students who are disabled or who have a primary language other than English of their rights under FERPA, the Act, and the Pupil Protection Rights Amendment, either through a student handbook distributed to each student in the school or by any means that are reasonably likely to inform them of their rights.

#### 6.9.1 Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Confidentiality of student records shall be preserved while access is provided to parents, eligible students (those over eighteen years of age or enrolled in post-secondary educational institutions), professional educators with legitimate educational interests, and those federal or state officials whose access is authorized in connection with an audit or evaluation of federal or state supported education programs or for the enforcement or compliance with federal legal requirements related to those programs. The Superintendent shall direct the publication of procedures through which parents or eligible students may request the correct of errors in student records. See Section 6.8.5 above for detailed error procedures.

The Board of Education designates the following information as "directory information." Unless a parent or eligible student makes a timely request to the principal of the school where the student is enrolled that such information not be designated directory information on the individual student, such information will not be considered confidential and may be disclosed upon request.

- a. Student's name, address, telephone listing, e-mail address, photograph, date and place of birth
- b. Parent or lawful custodian's name
- c. Grade level classification
- d. Dates of attendance
- e. Student's participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- f. Weight and height of athletic teams
- g. Last attended school
- h. Diplomas, certificates, awards, and honors received

Student records shall be provided to schools within or outside the school district upon request of the school where a student is enrolling.

#### 6.10 Student Health Services

The Board may offer limited student health services that are designed to address minor medical

Policy Manual (Gulf Shores City Schools)

issues that may arise during the school day or to assist with special or chronic health problems. In cases of acute or contagious illnesses, parents or guardians may be notified and required to pick up the student. If a parent or guardian is not available, the principal or school nurse may contact the Department of Public Health. School officials are authorized to take reasonable and appropriate steps to provide or arrange for the provision of emergency medical services to students who require immediate medical attention. In case of illness or accidental injury not requiring immediate medical attention, standard first aid procedures may be followed. **The Superintendent is authorized** to develop and promulgate procedures, rules, and regulations concerning the taking, administration, and handling of medication and anaphylaxis at school consistent with state law and appropriate health standards.

## **6.11 Student Conduct**

**Developed using input from teachers, school personnel, students, parents/guardians and is subject to periodic revision, the GSCS Code of Student Code (“CSC”) sets forth the rules and standards of conduct and discipline that are maintained and enforced within the Gulf Shores City Schools System.** The CSC applies to conduct occurring on school buses, at off-campus events, at school functions and activities whether or not occurring during the school day, and to conduct on the part of students with respect to which the school has an identifiable interest. The CSC sets forth the specific grounds for disciplinary action, the penalties, sanctions, or consequences that may be imposed for a violation of the CSC, the methods and procedures by which violations of the CSC will be determined, and any appeal or review procedures that are available to students. The CSC incorporates applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and the hearing and appeal procedures specified in the CSC conforms to applicable statutory and constitutional standards and requirements. The CSC can be found in the student handbook and will be made available on-line to all teachers, school personnel, students, parents and guardians at the beginning of each school year or when a new student enrolls. The CSC will be deemed an extension of Board policy and will have the force and effect thereof.

[(Reference: ALA.CODE 16-28-12, 16-28A-1 to 3 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02, 290-8-9-.09)]

## **6.12 Searches (Students)**

6.12.1 **Board Property:** All school system property, facilities, and grounds, including city of Gulf Shores property used for school purposes, may be entered, inspected, and searched for any lawful purpose by Board officials or their designees at any time, without prior notice and to the fullest extent permitted by law. The right to enter, inspect, and search includes and extends to (but is not limited to) Board owned or controlled offices, desks, file cabinets, lockers, computers, files, documents, data, and devices however and wherever kept, stored, or maintained.

6.12.2 **Personal Property:** Personal property, including but not limited to vehicles, purses, wallets, gym bags, book bags, cell phones, computers and personal electronic communication devices may be searched by authorized school officials, including school principals or their designees, when reasonable suspicion exists that the property contains

prohibited materials, illegal substances, weapons, or other items that are reasonably deemed to present a risk or threat to the safety or welfare of the school community, provided that the nature and extent of the search shall be reasonably related and limited to the suspected violation

6.12.3 Personal Searches: Students may be searched whenever reasonable suspicion exists that the student possesses prohibited materials, illegal substances, weapons, or other items that are reasonably deemed to present a risk or threat to the safety and welfare of the school community. Student searches must be conducted by a school administrator in the presence of another certified school employee and may include a frisk or “pat down” of the student, a search of personal items and clothing, or a more thorough search upon specific approval of the Superintendent. Personal searches will be conducted with due regard for the age and gender of the student. Searches that require physical contact between the school official and the student must be conducted and witnessed by officials of the same gender as the student and in a way that preserves the dignity of the student to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Refusal to submit to a search or to cooperate in a search as provided in this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action.

6.12.4 Use of Recovered Items: Property, material, substances, information, or records that are obtained, discovered, or recovered as a result of a search may be retained and used for any lawful purpose and/or documentation of Code of Conduct violation and/or released to law enforcement.

### **6.13 Corporal Punishment**

The Board does not permit the use of corporal punishment as a consequence for inappropriate behavior. School personnel are not prohibited from using appropriate physical contact or intervention in response to emergencies or other circumstances reasonably requiring such action. [Reference: ALA. CODE 16-28A-2 (1975)]

### **6.14 Physical Restraint and Seclusion**

#### 6.14.1 Policy Purpose:

- a. Gulf Shores City Schools acknowledges that maintaining a school environment conducive to learning requires that the environment be orderly and safe. Accordingly, the system recognizes that physical restraint of a student may sometimes be necessary in order to protect the student or other individuals.
- b. The purpose of this policy is to provide for the appropriate use of physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or member of the school community from imminent, serious physical harm, to prevent or minimize any harm to a student as a result of the use of physical restraint, and to prohibit other inappropriate forms of restraint.
- c. It is the intent of this policy to emphasize and encourage the use of techniques for the prevention and de-escalation of inappropriate behavior, in order to reduce the

risk of injury to students and program staff, as well as facilitate the care, safety, and welfare of students.

#### 6.14.2 Definitions:

- a. *Physical restraint* – is direct physical contact from an adult that prevents or significantly restricts a student’s movement. The term physical restraint does not include mechanical restraint or chemical restraint. Additionally, physical restraint does not include: providing limited physical contact and/or redirection to a student in order to promote safety or to prevent self-injurious behavior; providing physical guidance or prompting to a student when teaching a skill; redirecting attention; providing guidance to a location; providing comfort; or providing limited physical contact as reasonably needed to prevent imminent destruction to school or another person’s property.
- b. *Chemical restraint* – is any medication that is used to control violent physical behavior or to restrict the student’s freedom of movement that is not a prescribed treatment for a medical or psychiatric condition of the student.
- c. *Mechanical restraint* – is the use of any device or material attached to or adjacent to a student’s body that is intended to restrict the normal freedom of movement and which cannot be easily removed by the student. The term does not include an adaptive or protective device recommended by a physician or therapist when used as recommended by the physician or therapist to promote normative body positioning and physical functioning, and/or to prevent self-injurious behavior. The term also does not include seatbelts and other safety equipment when used to secure students during transportation.
- d. *Seclusion* – is a procedure that isolates and confines the student in a separate, locked area until he or she is no longer an immediate danger to himself/herself or others. Seclusion occurs in a specifically constructed or designated room or space that is physically isolated from common areas and from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include situations in which a staff member trained in the use of de-escalation techniques or restraint is physically present in the same unlocked room as the student; time-out as defined herein; in-school suspension; detention; or a student-requested break in a different location in the room or in a separate room.
- e. *Exclusion Time-out* – is a behavioral intervention in which the student is temporarily removed from the **immediate** learning activity. Time-out is appropriately used and is not deemed to be seclusion when:
  1. The non-locking setting used for time-out is appropriately lighted, ventilated, and heated or cooled.
  2. **The duration of the time-out is reasonable in light of the purpose of the time-out, the age of the child and the capability of the child; however, each time-out should not exceed the equivalency of one minute per year of the child age. For example, a 6 year-old student should not exceed a six-minute time-out.**

3. The student is reasonably monitored by an attending adult who is in reasonable physical proximity of the student and has sight of the student while in time-out.
4. The time-out space is free of objects that unreasonably expose the student or others to harm.
5. Students who are receiving special education services, the IEP team should be involved in making decisions concerning the use of behavior modification procedures such as time-out.

#### 6.14.3 Prohibitions:

- a. The use of physical restraint is prohibited in the school system and its educational programs except in those situations in which the student is an immediate danger to himself or others and the student is not responsive to reasonably implemented and less intensive behavioral interventions, such as verbal directives and other de-escalation techniques. Physical restraint as a form of discipline or punishment is prohibited.
- b. All physical restraint must be immediately terminated when the student is deemed to no longer be an immediate danger to himself or others or if the student is observed to be in severe distress during the restraint. Any method of physical restraint in which physical pressure is applied to the student's body in such a manner as to restrict the flow of air into the student's lungs is prohibited in the school system and its educational programs.
- c. The use of chemical restraint is prohibited in the school system and its educational programs.
- d. The use of mechanical restraint is prohibited in the school system and its educational programs.
- e. The use of seclusion is prohibited in the school system and its educational programs.

#### 6.14.4 Requirements:

- a. Each designated staff person who engages or participates in any incident of any permitted or prohibited restraint or seclusion of a student has a duty to promptly report the incident to the local school principal.
- b. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program that utilize restraint under this policy should provide staff with guidelines and procedural information regarding physical restraint and arrange for the appropriate training of those designated staff members that may be called upon to restrain a student. This training of designated staff members should be provided as a part of a program which addresses prevention and de-escalation techniques as well as positive behavioral intervention strategies. The training of designated staff members will be based on evidence-based techniques and strategies when possible. Designated staff members will be trained regarding their responsibility to promptly report each incident of physical restraint, whether



- initiated, continued or discontinued in compliance with this policy or not, and each incident of prohibited chemical and/or mechanical restraint or seclusion. Each local school's principal or his/her designee or program coordinator shall be responsible for providing periodic reviews.
- c. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program that utilize restraint is expected to maintain written or electronic documentation on training provided at the local school regarding permissible physical restraint as well as prohibited physical, chemical or mechanical restraint or seclusion. The principal or designee should also maintain the list of participants in each training session. Records of such training will be made available to the Alabama Department of Education or any member of the public upon request.
  - d. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program that utilize restraint is responsible for generating and maintaining incident and debriefing reports of the use of restraint or seclusion at the local school and for submitting monthly summary reports regarding such incidents to the school system's Board of Education and to the Alabama Department of Education annually. Each local school principal or his/her designee or program's coordinator is expected to monitor the use of physical restraint on an on-going basis to ensure fidelity of implementation. Following a restraint situation, the individuals involved will have a SWOT meeting to discuss the event. Follow-up training will also be provided following any situation in which policies and procedures are not followed.
  - e. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program that utilize restraint shall endeavor to provide a debriefing session following each incident of permissible restraint, prohibited restraint and/or seclusion of a student. All school personnel involved in the incident and appropriate administrative staff will be expected to participate in a debriefing session for the purpose of planning to prevent or reduce the reoccurrence of the use of restraint. A student's parent or legal guardian will be provided notification of this debriefing session and afforded the opportunity to attend or to request that the debriefing session be rescheduled. The debriefing session shall occur no later than five school days following the imposition of physical restraint or seclusion, unless the debriefing session is delayed, at the request of a student's parent or legal guardian, so that the parent or legal guardian may attend.
  - f. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program that utilize restraint will provide written notification to a student's parent or legal guardian when physical restraint is used on a student within a reasonable time following the restraint.
  - g. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program will provide written notification to a student's parent or legal guardian when their child is restrained and/or removed from his/her school or program setting by emergency, medical, or law enforcement personnel within a reasonable time following the removal.
  - h. Each student's parent or legal guardian will be provided information regarding the school or program's policies governing the use of physical restraint. To

effectuate this requirement, the school system's website and student handbook/code of conduct will contain the following statement:

As a part of the policies and procedures of the school system, the use of physical restraint is prohibited in the system and its educational programs except in those situations in which the student is an immediate danger to himself or others and the student is not responsive to reasonably implemented and less intensive behavioral interventions such as verbal directives and other de-escalation techniques. Physical restraint is prohibited when used as a form of discipline or punishment. The use of other physical restraint, chemical restraint, mechanical restraint, or seclusion is prohibited in the school system and its educational programs.

The use of restraint may occur along with other emergency actions such as the school seeking assistance from law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel which could result in a removal of the student by such personnel.

Significant violations of the law including assaults on students and staff will be reported to the police. As soon as possible after the restraint or removal of a student (and no longer than one school day following the occurrence), written notice will be provided to the parent or legal guardian.

#### 6.14.5 Clarifications:

- a. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to interfere with the school system's or school personnel's authority to utilize time-out as defined herein or to utilize any other classroom management technique or approach, including a student's removal from the classroom, not specifically addressed under this policy.
- b. Nothing in this policy modifies the rights of school personnel to use reasonable force as permitted under the Code of Alabama, 1975, §16-1-14 or modifies the rules and procedures governing discipline under the Code of Alabama, 1975, §16-28-12.
- c. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit the school system or school personnel from taking reasonable actions to diffuse or break up a student fight or altercation.
- d. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit the school system or school personnel from taking reasonable action to obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous objects on a student or within the control of a student.
- e. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to eliminate or restrict the ability of school personnel to use his or her discretion in the use of physical restraint as provided in this policy to protect students or others from imminent harm or bodily injury.
- f. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to create a criminal offense or a private cause of action against any local board of education or program or its agents or employees.

- g. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to interfere with the duties of law enforcement or emergency medical personnel or to interfere with the rights of the school system or school personnel from seeking assistance from law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel.
- h. Violation of this policy by school system personnel may be deemed to be a failure to perform duties in a satisfactory manner and may be deemed to provide grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal, if appropriate under the circumstances.

#### **6.15 Student Suspension (including Students with Disabilities)**

In order to maintain order, minimize the risk of potential personal injury, property damage or disruption, or to permit an orderly investigation and evaluation of a suspected violation of school or school system rules, standards, or policies, principals may temporarily suspend a student pending a conference with the parent or guardian of the student and a final disciplinary decision. Suspension may also be imposed as a disciplinary measure as provided in the Code of Student Conduct. Suspension of students with disabilities will be subject to applicable limitations and requirements imposed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”) and its implementing regulations.

#### **6.16 Student Expulsion (including Students with Disabilities)**

Students may be expelled from school for offenses serious enough to warrant such action as provided in the Code of Student Conduct or other Board disciplinary policies. Students who are recommended for expulsion may be suspended until such time as the Board meets to consider the recommendation for expulsion. Reasonable notice of the proposed action, the reasons therefore, and an opportunity to be heard will be afforded to the student and the student’s parent or guardian prior to a final decision by the Board regarding expulsion. The superintendent will notify the student or the student’s parents or guardian, in writing, of any action taken by the Board. The Term of an expulsion may extend to the maximum permitted by law. The Board may impose such reasonable limitations on the student’s right to re-enroll in the school system following expiration of expulsion as may be permitted by law. A student who withdraws from school prior to the Board’s consideration of a proposed expulsion may not re-enroll in the school system until the Board holds a hearing or other appropriate proceedings regarding the recommended expulsion. Expulsion of students with disabilities will be subject to applicable limitations and requirements imposed by the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”) and its implementing regulations.

#### **6.17 Electronic Communication Devices**

Personal, wireless communication devices include, but are not limited to cellular telephones, smart phones, e-mail devices, tablets, or any other electronic communication device. Students may possess a cell phone or other personal, wireless communication device on school property, but use of such devices during the school day is limited to uses expressly permitted by the supervising teacher or administrator. The Board assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, or

damage to any personal, wireless communication device. Principals or designees have the authority to restrict and deny the use of personal, wireless communication devices by any student to prevent the misuse, abuse, or violation of school rules regarding the use of such devices. School officials may read, examine, or inspect the contents of any such device upon reasonable suspicion that the device contains evidence of a violation of law, Board policy, the Code of Student Conduct, or other rules, provided that the nature and extent of such examination shall be reasonably related and limited to the suspected violation. ALA. CODE §16-1-27 (1975)

## **6.18 Driver's License**

6.18.1 Driver's License: Unless exempted from the requirement by Board policy, a person under the age of 19 years may not under state law obtain a driver's license or a learner's permit without being enrolled in school or meeting alternative criteria established by law. Additionally, a driver's license may be suspended or revoked if a student withdraws or fails to attend school. Students may be exempted or excused from otherwise applicable statutory requirements if their withdrawal or nonattendance is caused by circumstances beyond the control of the student. Circumstances beyond the control of the student may be found with respect to:

- a. Students who are mentally or physically unable to attend school;
- b. Students who are regularly and legally employed in compliance with the provisions of the Child Labor Law; and
- c. Students who, because of the lack of public transportation, are compelled to walk more than two miles to attend a public school.

Students who are denied a driver's license by virtue of their non-enrollment may appeal a decision affecting the student's eligibility for a driver's license to the Superintendent. The appeal should be in writing and filed with the school principal within 15 days of the decision from which the appeal is taken, and should set forth the reasons on which the appeal is based. An appeal should be promptly forwarded to the Superintendent for review and final decision.

6.18.2 Administrative Procedures Authorized: The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures to implement the provisions of this policy and to comply fully with state law. [Reference: ALA. CODE §16-28-40, *et seq.* (1975)]

## **6.19 Student Parking Privileges**

In order to promote the safety and welfare of students and others who work on or visit school campuses, to encourage the development of safe and responsible driving practices, and to serve the general purposes of maintaining a drug and alcohol free school environment, students will be granted the privilege of driving and parking on school property only if they are free of the effects of alcohol or other illegal or controlled substances. Principals may impose reasonable additional conditions or requirements for the privilege of driving or parking a vehicle on school property including, for example, conditions relating to maintenance of academic and attendance standards and the payment of fees. Principals may also establish priorities for issuance and

assignment of parking permits.

## 6.20 Anti-Harassment

6.20.1 Harassment, Violence, and Threats of Violence Prohibited: No student shall engage in or be subjected to harassment, violence, threats of violence, or intimidation by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics that have been identified by the Board in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions.

### 6.20.2 Definitions:

- a. The term “*harassment*” as used in this policy means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior that takes place on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to, written, electronic, verbal, or physical acts that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics set forth in Section 3(b) below. To constitute harassment, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:
  1. Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property;
  2. Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student;
  3. Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school;
  4. Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function;
  5. Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.
- b. The term “*violence*” as used in this policy means the infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.
- c. The term “*threat of violence*” as used in this policy means an expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and is directed to another student.
- d. The term “*intimidation*” as used in this policy means a threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student, especially for the purpose of coercing or deterring the student from participating in or taking advantage of any school program, benefit, activity, or opportunity for which the student is or would be eligible.
- e. The term “*student*” as used in this policy means a student who is enrolled in the

Gulf Shores City school system.

6.20.3 Description of Behavior Expected of Students:

- a. Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting harassment, violence, or intimidation; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student; and (3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that is identified in this policy.
- b. Violence, threats of violence, harassment, and intimidation are prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary consequences and sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the victim of such conduct:
  1. The student's race;
  2. The student's gender;
  3. The student's religion;
  4. The student's national origin;
  5. The student's disability;
  6. The student's sexual orientation,
  7. The student's imbalance of strength, power, or influence; or
  8. Other personal characteristics which motivate the prohibited action.
- c. Except as otherwise provided in this policy, the expectations of students expressed herein are not limited to behaviors which occur only on school grounds. This policy is premised on the notion that violence, threats of violence, intimidation, bullying and cyberbullying of one student by another may be detrimental to the best interest and welfare of students and disruptive of the opportunity for student learning in Gulf Shores City Schools without regard to the location where such behaviors occur. It is acknowledged that in some situations the nexus between the regulation of such unacceptable behaviors and Gulf Shores City Schools' interest in providing a safe environment for its students may be remote and thus not an appropriate basis for school disciplinary action. However, where the offending behavior causes a material and substantial disruption to school activities or undermines the ability of a student to learn in a non-hostile environment, students violating this policy may be subject to discipline regardless of where the offending conduct occurs.

6.20.4 Consequences for Violations: A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy are outlined in the Code of Student Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under authority of this policy.

#### 6.20.5 Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedure:

- a. Complaints alleging violations of this policy must be made on district approved complaint forms available at the principal and/or counselor's office. The complaint must be signed by the student alleging the violation or by the student's parent or legal guardian and delivered to the principal or the principal's designee either by mail or personal delivery. At the request of the complaining student or the student's parent or legal guardian, incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally.
- b. Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal's designee will, in his/her sole discretion, determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the complaint alleges a serious violation, the principal or the principal's designee will undertake an investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence and will be conducted in a reasonably prompt time period taking into account the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violation(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system.
- c. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.
- d. The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee will inform the student's parent or guardian of the report.

#### 6.20.6 Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms:

This policy and any procedures, rules, and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be published, disseminated, and made available to students, parents and legal guardians, and employees by such means and methods as are customarily used for such purposes, including publication on the Gulf Shores City Schools website.

#### 6.20.7 Voluntary Religious Expression:

The Gulf Shores City Board of Education does not discriminate against students or their parents or guardians on the basis of their religious viewpoints or their expression of such viewpoints. Such views and expressions are treated in the same manner as nonreligious viewpoints, activities, or expressions.

Students may express their religious beliefs in all phases of their schoolwork without penalty or reward based on the religious nature or content of such expression. Schoolwork is evaluated according to the academic standards and pedagogical objectives that otherwise apply to the work or activity in question. These standards and objectives include, but are not limited to, acquisition and/or mastery of factual information; development of analytical, problem solving, learning, critical thinking, communication, organization, and social skills; college preparatory and career readiness training, proficiency in and appreciation of the performing arts; and the development of personal skills that are designed to facilitate attainment of the foregoing objectives, future academic success, and employability. The scholastic work of the system's students will be evaluated in light of the foregoing standards and objectives, academic and curricular guidelines, and criteria established or approved by the state and Gulf Shores City Board of Education and determined by evaluation, achievement, assessment, and testing materials, instruments, methods, and measures that have been generally recognized as appropriate for such purposes within the educational community and applied successfully in public school settings.

Students may organize and participate in religious activities before, during, and after school and have access to school facilities to the same extent students are permitted to organize and participate in other non-curricular activities to the extent that such access to or use of Board facilities does not constitute a constitutionally impermissible endorsement or sponsorship of the organization or violate any right established or imposed by either the Alabama or United States Constitutions. Reference: Act of Alabama No. 2015-129

## **6.21 Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention (Jason Flatt Act)**

Suicide is the tenth cause of death in the United States according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For youth between the ages of 10 and 24, the cause of death rankings are 2nd and 3rd in the nation, and these rankings are higher for youth in the same age brackets in the state of Alabama. The *Jason Flatt Act* was passed in order to equip education institutions and their personnel to recognize and act on signs of suicide risk in order to provide prevention, intervention and postvention with students at risk, their families and the communities who may be affected.

### **6.21.1 Prevention of Suicide:**

The *Jason Flatt Act* was passed in order to equip Alabama school districts and



their personnel to recognize and act on signs of suicide risk in order to provide prevention, intervention, and postvention with students at risk, their families, and the communities who may be affected. This act, which amends 16-28B-8 of the Code of Alabama 1975, includes prevention of harassment and violence.

6.21.2 *The Jason Flatt Act* includes several elements which should be interpreted as Policy. Schools systems will:

- a. Foster individual, family, and group counseling services related to suicide prevention.
- b. Make referral, crisis intervention, and other related information available for students, parents, and school personnel.
- c. Foster training for school personnel who are responsible for counseling and supervising students.
- d. Increase student awareness of the relationship between drug and alcohol use and suicide.
- e. Educate students in recognizing signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts and warning signs of suicide.
- f. Inform students of available community suicide prevention services.
- g. Promote cooperative efforts between school personnel and community suicide prevention program personnel.
- h. Foster school-based or community-based, or both, alternative programs outside of the classroom.
- i. Develop a strategy to assist survivors of attempted suicide, students, and school personnel in coping with the issues relating to attempted suicide, suicide, the death of a student, and healing.
- j. Engage in any other program or activity which the local board determines is appropriate and prudent in the efforts of the school system to prevent student suicide
- k. Provide training for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students on the local board policies to prevent harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence.
- l. Develop a process for discussing with students local board policies relating to the prevention of student suicide and to the prevention of harassment, intimidation, violence, and threats of violence.
- m. Provide annual training for all certificated school employees in suicide awareness and prevention. This training may be provided within the framework of existing in-service training programs or as a part of required professional development offered by the local school system.

6.21.3 Description of Behavior Expected of Students:

Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect and dignity and comply with the Gulf Shores City Schools Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required to 1) comply with the requirements of the law, policy, regulations,

and rules prohibiting harassment, violence, or intimidation and 2) to comply with the system's prevention strategies related to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention support.

6.21.4 Responsibility of Reporting:

Any person involved in a cause of action or omission resulting from the implementation of this suicide prevention policy or resulting from any training, or lack thereof, required by this section, shall be subject to state immunity law.

6.21.5 Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms:

This policy and any procedures and rules developed and approved to implement the policy will be published, disseminated, and made available to students, parents, and legal custodian, and employees by such means and methods are customarily used for such purposes, including publications on the school district's website. ACT # 2016-310

**6.22 *Graduation Requirements***

All students entering the 9th grade are required to complete course requirements for graduation as specified by the Alabama State Board of Education and the Gulf Shores Board of Education. A document that describes requirements for all diplomas and certificates awarded by the Gulf Shores Board of Education will be disseminated to students and parents.

Documents describing graduation requirements for students shall describe types of diplomas and endorsements by graduating class/year/cohort, total credits and assessments required, core course requirements, elective course offerings, and the process for earning weighted credit when appropriate. Additionally, such publications shall describe courses and/or procedures by which students may earn credits toward graduation prior to grade 9 and procedures for the validation and/or acceptance of credits for students transferring into the Gulf Shores School System. [Reference(s): Code of Alabama 16-11-9, 16-26-1, Alabama Administrative Code §290-030-010-.06(11) (K)1]

**6.23 *Participation in Graduation Ceremonies***

The Gulf Shores Board of Education authorizes local high school principals and appropriate staff members to design and implement graduation ceremony exercises for their respective schools. In all cases, eligibility criteria for participation in graduation exercises (marching) shall encompass the following provisions:

- A. Senior regular education and special education students who earn any Alabama high school diploma are eligible to participate in the graduation ceremony (march).

- B. Special education students who have not met the requirements for a diploma but have met the requirements of their IEPs shall be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony and will be awarded the Graduation Certificate.
- C. Students who meet all requirements after their designated graduation date may participate in the next graduation ceremony/exercise.

[Reference(s): Code of Alabama 16-11-9]

## EXISTING BCBE GUIDELINES

### Participation in Graduation:

- students are not required to walk
- students must fulfill all required credits in order to walk and be in good standing (paid any outstanding fees)

### 6.24 Class Rankings and Honor Graduates

6.24.1 Ranking of Students: Rank-in-class is an indication of the student's academic standing in relation to that of the other students in the class. Grades in the identified course levels shall be weighted and grade point averages determined. The procedures for ranking students are as follows:

- Tentative rank will be made at the end of the eleventh grade and final rank at the end of first semester of the senior year after second quarter exams are administered and grades are averaged. Do students earn 0.5 credits at the end of the semester?
- The top ten (10) students will come from those students receiving the Diploma with Advanced Honors Endorsement or the Diploma with Advanced Academic Endorsement.
- The top ten (10) students will be advised of their ranking at the end of their eleventh grade year.
- The top ten (10) positions may be filled by more than 10 students in the case of ties for any positions.
- Letter grades (A, B, C, D, F, and NC [not clear = F]) for all subjects will be used in computing the grade point average. (GPA or Numeric?)
- All students within a grade level shall be included in determining class rank.

## EXISTING BCBE GUIDELINES:

**Class Rank:** ACADEMIC HONORS AND CLASS RANK Eligibility for academic honors will be determined by calculating the cumulative weighted average of all final course grades posted on the high

school transcript. Students who earn a D or F in any high school course will not be eligible to receive academic honors. The academic honors designations shall be awarded as follows:

- Summa Cum Laude (with highest honors) 4.00 and higher
- Magna Cum Laude (with high honors) 3.75-3.9999
- Cum Laude (with honors) 3.50-3.7499 A student's final cumulative weighted grade point average calculated to at least the fourth decimal place, including grades earned for repeated courses, will be used to determine class rank.

6.24.2 Valedictorian and Salutatorian Selection: To be considered for Valedictorian or Salutatorian, the student must receive the Diploma with Advanced Honors Endorsement. The student with the highest grade point average will be the Valedictorian of the graduating class. The student with the second highest grade point average will be the Salutatorian. In the case of a tie in either position, students will be declared Co-Valedictorians/Co-Salutatorians. The grade point average will be carried to five decimal places with no rounding. The criteria for selecting Valedictorian and Salutatorian are as follows:

- a. Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be determined at the end of the first semester of the senior year after grades are averaged using the "Rank-in-Class" procedures.
- b. Out-of-system transfer students must be enrolled in the current school starting with the first semester of the junior year and complete three (3) consecutive semesters in the Gulf Shores School System prior to ranking to be considered for Valedictorian and Salutatorian.
- c. All students must take a full schedule (maximum course load) each year for four (4) years in order to be eligible.

[References: Code of Alabama 16-11-9]

## 6.25 *Student Promotion and Retention*

It is suggested that students in danger of failing be presented to the school's **problem solving team** for consideration of possible intervention strategies.

6.25.1 Grades K-5: The process of making decisions as to promotion and retention of elementary students should take into consideration a variety of factors including age, maturity, motor coordination, capacity for learning, and academic progress. The determination process should involve the principal, teacher(s), and parent(s) with the authority for determining promotion and retention resting with the principal, teacher(s), and parent(s). If a student's parent(s) do not agree with the decision, they have the right to appeal to the superintendent. A kindergarten student may be retained only upon approval/agreement of the student's parent(s) or guardian(s). If a student may need to be retained based on the teacher's professional judgment of the student's academic performance and/or other factors, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of that student would be

informed as early in the school year as possible. In all cases, the decision of whether a student should be promoted or retained shall be made on the basis of which grade placement provides the student a better chance of progressing in his/her educational development. Passing reading and math, in the respective grade levels (1-5) is required for promotion to the next grade. Successful completion of an approved summer school program after retention in a grade level may make the student eligible for promotion in the subsequent school year.

6.25.2 Grades 6-8: Students in grades sixth through eighth must pass the following: reading (6th grade only), language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies with a yearly average of 60 (D) or higher.

6.25.3 Grades 9-12: For students to be permitted to move to the next higher grade level, the following standards must be met:

- a. 9th Grade students who have successfully completed middle school.
- b. 9th to 10th Grade students who have earned six (6) Carnegie units will be classified as tenth graders.
- c. 10th to 11th Grade students who have earned twelve (12) Carnegie units will be classified as eleventh graders.
- d. 11th to 12th Grade students who have earned eighteen (18) Carnegie units and are able to complete all graduation requirements within the school year will be classified as twelfth graders.

6.25.4 Special Education Students: Promotion of any student in a special education program, with the exception of gifted students, must be based on his/her accomplishments of goals stated in the IEP in conjunction with all other regular program requirements. However, a special education student (except gifted) may not be placed at any grade level unless the student has attended school for a commensurate number of years equal to the proposed grade placement; i.e., for a special education student to be placed at the sixth (6th) grade level, he/she must have been enrolled in school for at least five (5) years.

[Reference(s): Code of Alabama 16-11-9]

6.25.5 Parent Requested Retention/Promotion: Parents who wish for their child to be retained or promoted, at any grade level, due to academic, social, emotional, or physical needs should make a request in writing to the school principal. After considering the needs presented, the principal and superintendent will make the decision concerning promotion or retention.

## 6.26 *Student Grievances*

Whenever a Gulf Shores School System student believes that he/she has a complaint, every effort is to be made to arrive at a satisfactory resolution of the problem on an informal basis. When this cannot be done, students can resort to the more formal procedures as provided herein.

#### 6.26.1 Definitions:

- a. *Complaint* – any alleged violation, misinterpretation or any inequitable application of any published policy, rule or regulation of the school system. Complaint shall not apply to any matter in which the method of review is prescribed by law. Complaints are objections to a specific act or condition.
- b. *Complainant* – any student or group of students, directly affected by the alleged misinterpretation or violation, filing a complaint.
- c. *Faculty/Staff and Administration* – the employees of the Gulf Shores Board of Education or representatives under the direct supervision of an employee of the school board.
- d. *Day* – a school/academic day.
- e. *Time Limits* – The number of days indicated at each level is to be considered the maximum. Time limits may be extended by mutual agreement between the parties.
- f. *Released Time* – The complaint procedure will normally be carried out during non-instructional time. If, however, the board elects to carry out provisions during instructional time, the complainant shall not lose academic credit.

#### 6.26.2 Complaint Procedure:

- a. *Informal Discussion* – If a student believes there is a basis for complaint, he/she shall discuss the complaint with his/her principal or the designee of the principal, except in cases of discrimination or harassment involving the principal or the designee, in which case the complainant shall report to the Superintendent designee (Title IX Equity Coordinator or 504 Coordinator) within five (5) days of the occurrence of the alleged violation except in cases involving harassment or discrimination in which thirty (30) days will be allowed.
- b. *Level One* – If the complainant is not satisfied with the informal resolution he/she may, within ten (10) days, file a formal complaint in writing and deliver it to his/her principal or designee. The principal or designee shall communicate his/her answer in writing to the complainant within ten (10) days of receiving the written complaint. Class complaints involving more than one (1) principal or designee and complaints involving an administrator above the building level may be filed by the complainant at level two.
- c. *Level Two* – If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution at level one he/she may, within ten (10) days of the answer, file a copy of the complaint with the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall indicate his/her disposition in writing to the complainant within ten (10) days.
- d. *Board Appeal* – If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution by the Superintendent, he/she shall have the right to appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Gulf Shores Board of Education, provided request for placement on board agenda is filed within ten (10) days.

Confidentiality will be provided to the extent possible to any student or affected party who alleges discrimination or harassment.

[References: Code of Alabama 16-1-30, 16-12-3(C)]

**6.27 Student Dress Code**

***“TBD”***