



Parent/Guardian/Student Handbook 2025-26

**GCC Virtual Academy
5112 Arnold Avenue
McClellan, CA 95652
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GCC Virtual Academy is a program of Community Collaborative Charter School (CCCS)





Gateway Community Charters, Inc. (GCC) is an independent non-profit 501(c)3 agency that was created to support students, parents and communities through the conception, development, administration and governance of innovative, high quality, standards-based educational opportunities within charter school constructs. In cooperation with the Local Educational Agency (LEA), Twin Rivers Unified School District (TRUSD), the GCC reaches out to the greater Sacramento County community to create schools to serve the educational needs of the underserved, for example: the disenfranchised, culturally diverse economically disadvantaged, homeless, parenting teens, working young adults, fifth year seniors, English language learners and others.

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Mr. Jason Sample, CEO/Superintendent Gateway Community Charters
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GCC Virtual Academy staff implement and model the GCC core values, which spell out the acronym SERVICE:

STUDENT FOCUSED
EXCELLENCE
RESPONSIBILITY
VALUING PEOPLE
INTEGRITY
COLLABORATION
EMPOWERMENT

PORTRAIT OF A GCC GRADUATE

ACADEMICALLY READY

Life-long Learner
Content Knowledge
Digital Literacy
Critical Thinker



GLOBAL CITIZENS

Culturally & Socially Respectful
Service-Oriented
Responsible



WORKFORCE & COLLEGE READY

Skills and Competencies
Professional Communicators
Innovative and Creative



PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS

Problem Solver
Cooperative & Collaborative
Leader and Advocate



LIFE READY

Adaptable
Self-Aware
Financially Aware
Empathetic



REFLECTIVE CITIZENS

Curious
Growth-Mindset
Plan for Future



All of the work we do at GCC Virtual Academy is aligned with the GCC Portrait of a Graduate.

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CCCS Mission/Vision

It is the mission of CCCS to implement a rigorous, standards-based curriculum in an equitable, personalized, and culturally responsive learning environment with access to community resources for students and their families.

The vision of CCCS is to establish a personalized setting, serving a full range of students, explicitly designed to cultivate their transition to successful post-secondary educational, vocational, and personal endeavors. CCCS students will graduate with a high school diploma and will have opportunities to gain skills that will prepare them to be academically ready, workforce and college ready, life-ready, global, productive citizens, and reflective citizens.

Equity

Recognizing that equity does not mean equality, Virtual Academy works to align systems, accountability, supports, and resources to achieve excellence for all students by providing high quality, rigorous instruction, curriculum, and equitable opportunities and outcomes by ensuring academic engagement and support for all students.

Virtual Instruction

Virtual Learning Overview

The GCC Virtual Academy (VA) offers a high-quality online education through a combination of live instruction, independent study, and academic support. Curriculum is delivered via secure, standards-aligned, A–G approved digital platforms that are accessible 24/7 and designed to support students of all abilities. Interactive learning tools such as read-aloud, closed-captioning, and instant feedback assessments ensure all students can engage with content and develop critical thinking skills.

Daily Expectations & Attendance

Students must attend virtual school Monday through Friday, which includes live instruction, independent assignments, and academic support. Daily attendance is mandatory and based on participation in live sessions, assignment completion, and engagement. Academic credit and attendance are earned through consistent participation and submission of work, as outlined in the signed Master Agreement. Students are required to keep their camera on with their face visible during all classes; failure to do so will result in an absence, removal from the class or session, and parent/guardian notification. Parents/guardians and students share responsibility for ensuring timely submission of work. Under current California law, there are no excused absences—illness or emergencies do not exempt students from completing assignments or attending classes. In cases of prolonged illness or emergencies, families must communicate with school staff to discuss alternative options.

Learning Environment & Behavior

Students must participate from a quiet, distraction-free space. During all virtual interactions, students are expected to:

- Be dressed appropriately
- Demonstrate respectful digital behavior
- Keep their camera on with their face visible at all times unless otherwise instructed

Technology Use & Support

Each student is issued a school-managed Chromebook, which must be used for all school-related activities. Chromebooks:

- Are monitored 24/7 by GoGuardian filtering software
- Must remain in their issued case, free of stickers or personal decorations

- Must be maintained in good condition—families are responsible for lost or damaged devices, cords, or cases

If a student has difficulty accessing the internet, a hotspot may be provided upon request. All technology issues must be reported promptly to avoid unexcused absences. Technology misuse or refusal to follow camera policy may result in disciplinary action.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

Family support is critical to student success in virtual learning. Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Ensure students log in on time and attend the full school day
- Provide a dedicated space and necessary materials for learning
- Monitor academic progress and assignment completion
- Communicate regularly with teachers and school staff
- Keep contact information (email, phone, address) up to date

Note: Failure to meet attendance, participation, or technology expectations may result in intervention or removal from the virtual program.

Progress/Grade Reporting

Progress Reports will be sent out on the following dates:

Semester 1 – the week of October 6, 2025

Semester 2 – the week of March 16, 2026

Report Cards will be sent out on the following dates:

Semester 1 – the week of December 15, 2025

Semester 2 – the week of May 25, 2026

Code of Academic Conduct

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity is the foundation of learning at our school. All students are expected to complete their own work honestly and to uphold the highest standards of academic conduct—both in virtual and in-person learning environments.

What Constitutes Academic Dishonesty?

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Plagiarism: Copying or paraphrasing someone else's words, ideas, or work (including from websites, AI tools, or peers) without proper citation.
- Cheating: Using unauthorized materials, devices, or assistance during quizzes, tests, or assignments (e.g., open notes when not allowed, outside help, or collaboration when not permitted).
- Fabrication: Falsifying data, citations, or results in academic work (e.g., making up sources or experiments).
- Impersonation: Having someone else complete an assignment, quiz, or exam on your behalf—or completing work on behalf of another student.
- Unauthorized Collaboration: Working with others on assignments meant to be completed individually.
- Use of AI or Digital Tools: Submitting work generated by artificial intelligence or online tools (such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, etc.) without teacher permission or citation, unless explicitly approved for the assignment.
- Disrupting Online Learning Environments: Posting inappropriate comments, content, or messages in discussion boards, chats, or live sessions related to academic activities; Behaving in a manner that disrupts the learning of self or others.

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty

First Offense:

- Teacher notifies administration and submits a written report with evidence.
- Teacher contacts parent/guardian and reviews the Academic Honesty Policy with the student and parent.
- Student redoes the assignment/task with points deducted on final grade.
- Administration may restrict participation in non-academic activities.

Second Offense:

- Teacher repeats first-offense steps and assigns a zero (0%) for the affected assignment.
- Administration notifies all relevant staff (teachers, counselors, coaches) and parent/guardian.
- Student may be removed from extracurriculars, enrichment, or dual-enrollment programs.
- A failing grade in the course may be considered.
- Continued restriction from non-academic activities.

Third Offense:

- Same steps as second offense.
- Incident is documented in the student's permanent cumulative record.
- Student will receive a failing grade in the course.
- Student will be restricted from all non-academic activities.
- Removal from the virtual program may be recommended.

Promoting Integrity

Students are encouraged to:

- Ask questions when unsure if collaboration or tools are allowed
- Cite sources appropriately, even in digital formats
- Take pride in original work and personal effort
- Utilize academic support resources (tutors, office hours) instead of dishonest shortcuts
- Teachers may require verbal explanations or additional follow-up for submissions.

Student Discipline Guidelines

Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of conduct while attending school or school-sponsored events. In accordance with California Education Code 48900–48900.7, students may be suspended or recommended for expulsion when they engage in behavior that threatens the safety, well-being, or learning environment of others.

Grounds for Suspension or Expulsion include, but are not limited to:

- Using force or violence against another person
- Possessing, using, or selling weapons or dangerous objects
- Offering, using, or selling drugs, alcohol, or "look-alike" controlled substances
- Committing or attempting to commit robbery or extortion
- Causing or attempting to cause damage to school or personal property
- Stealing or attempting to steal school or personal property
- Possessing or using tobacco, nicotine products, or vaping devices
- Committing obscene acts or engaging in vulgarity or profanity
- Possessing, offering, or negotiating to sell drug paraphernalia
- Willfully defying or disrupting school staff or activities
- Possessing stolen property
- Possessing an imitation firearm

- Committing or attempting to commit sexual assault or battery
- Harassing, threatening, or intimidating a student witness
- Engaging in or attempting to engage in hazing
- Engaging in bullying, including cyberbullying

Note: This list is not exhaustive. Other behaviors may also be grounds for disciplinary action as determined by school administration and as outlined in the California Education Code.

Suspension and Expulsion Process

Suspension may be imposed upon a first offense if the student's behavior falls under Education Code sections 48900(a) through 48900(e), or if the student poses a danger to themselves or others. [E.C. 48900.5]

Expulsion is a more serious consequence, involving removal from the school for a defined period of time, as ordered by the Board of Education. Students have the right to due process, including a hearing and the opportunity to appeal.

A recommendation for expulsion may be made when:

- Other means of correction have failed or are not feasible
- The severity of the student's behavior poses a continuing danger to the physical safety of others [E.C. 48915(b) and (e)]

Suspension may be imposed upon a first offense if the student's behavior falls under Education Code sections 48900(a) through 48900(e), or if the student poses a danger to themselves or others. [E.C. 48900.5]

Student Dress Code

The purpose of the student dress code is to promote a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment that reflects the values of our school community. All students are expected to dress appropriately for a school setting—whether on campus, at school-related events, or while participating in virtual classes.

General Standards

- **Full Coverage Required:** Students must be fully clothed at all times. Clothing must cover all undergarments and private areas, even during movement. See-through or overly revealing garments are not permitted.
- **Modesty:** Clothing must not be excessively tight, short, low-cut, or otherwise immodest. All clothing should be appropriate for a professional and respectful learning environment.
- **Footwear:** Shoes must be worn at all times while on campus or attending school-sponsored events, in accordance with California state law. Footwear must be safe for all school activities (e.g., no bedroom slippers, wheels, or bare feet).
- **Safe Accessories:** Jewelry, chains, belts, or other accessories must not present a danger to the wearer or others. Items that could be used as weapons are strictly prohibited.

Prohibited Content

Clothing, accessories, and visible tattoos must be free from:

- Profane, vulgar, or obscene language or imagery
- Sexual content or suggestive graphics
- Hate speech or symbols, including those promoting racial, ethnic, gender-based, or religious prejudice
- Promotion of violence, illegal activity, drugs, alcohol, or tobacco/nicotine products
- Gang-related symbols, colors, or affiliations as identified by school or district administration

Virtual Learning Dress Expectations

Students participating in virtual instruction or in person activities are expected to follow the same dress guidelines as they would on a school campus. Attire must be appropriate for a school environment, including proper coverage and free from prohibited content, even when attending class from home. Violations of the dress code will be addressed promptly and respectfully. Students may be asked to change, cover, or remove non-compliant attire. Repeated or willful violations may result in progressive disciplinary action in accordance with the school's behavior policy.

Parent/Guardian/Family Involvement and Responsibilities

VA adheres to GCC Board Policy 01-08 for ensuring that parents/guardians have the opportunity for involvement at our school. Every parent, guardian, and family member of the school community shares in the responsibility for maintaining a safe and productive environment at VA. You share in this responsibility when you:

- Ensure that students report on time for their scheduled online sessions and classes. Punctuality and good attendance are family responsibilities. Students must be available from 8:30am-3:30pm on all school days. Make certain your children log in on time and are ready to learn, free of background distractions;
- Accept the rights and authority of the school to maintain standards of behavior for all students;
- Understand school rules. Review the VA handbook with your family;
- Provide study materials for your child's needs. If you are uncertain what materials are necessary, contact your child's teacher;
- Provide a suitable time and place for study at home. Parents have a great influence on the study habits of their children;
- Keep track of your child's scholastic achievement and progress. Review assigned work, progress reports, and report cards with your child. Children learn more when their parents or guardians are involved in monitoring their progress;
- Participate regularly in your child's educational program;
- Maintain consistent communication with your child's teacher and other school staff members; and
- Keep school informed of current phone numbers, address, and email.

Parent/Guardian Rights

You have the right to:

- Information about and progress of your child's achievement, behavior in our online environment, and attendance, which will only be provided to parents/legal guardians/caregivers listed on enrollment documentation;
- Expect a safe environment that is non-threatening and allows your children to achieve at their maximum academic potential; and
- Information about all school rules, regulations, and expectations.

School Administrator/Teacher/Support Staff Responsibilities

The teachers and administrators of VA demonstrate professional behavior in their attitudes and in their communication with students and parents. It is VA's goal to:

- Communicate regularly and in a timely manner with students and their families about the child's academic progress, behavior, and attendance;
- Establish an online environment in which students can meet grade level academic standards;
- Involve students in an ongoing process of self-evaluation;
- Communicate school expectations;
- Communicate program requirements, including grading policy;
- Enforce school rules fairly and consistently;
- Treat all students and parents/guardians/families with dignity and respect

Capturing Kids' Hearts

"If you have a child's heart, you have his head." - Flip Flippen

Truly remarkable outcomes are possible in an online classroom where trust, respect, and caring relationships flourish. Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) provides tools for administrators, faculty and staff to build positive, productive, trusting relationships among themselves and with their students. These processes can transform the classroom and campus environment, paving the way for high performance. All GCC Virtual Academy staff are trained in CKH and have been taught skills that help: Develop safe, trusting, self-managing classrooms; improve classroom attendance by building students' motivation and helping them take responsibility for their actions and performance; decrease delinquent behaviors such as disruptive outbursts, violent acts, drug use and other risky behavior; utilize the EXCEL Model (Engage, Xplore, Communicate, Empower, Launch) and reinforce the role of emotional intelligence in teaching; and, develop students' empathy for diverse cultures and background.

Assessments

CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress)

Each spring, students in California participate in the statewide testing program, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) system. The tests in the CAASPP system provide information to teachers, parents/guardians and students about student progress. In grades 3 through 8 and in grade 11, students take the Smarter Balanced online tests for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. Students who have a significant cognitive disability (as designated in their IEP) are eligible to take the California Alternate Assessments (CAA). In grades five, eight and once in high school, students take the California Science Test (CAST). Students in grades 5, 7 and 9 also complete the PFT (Physical Fitness Test).

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a parent's or guardian's written request to school officials to excuse his or her child from any or all parts of the assessments administered pursuant to this chapter shall be granted.

ELPAC (English Language Proficiency Assessments)

Students in kindergarten through grade twelve who are classified as English Learners, will take the ELPAC summative assessment every year until they are reclassified as proficient in English. Students are tested on their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. To learn more about the ELPAC, please read the *Parent Guide to Understanding the ELPAC*, which can be found at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/documents/elpacpgtu.pdf>. If you have any questions about your student taking the ELPAC, please contact the school office.

iReady

Students will be required to complete the iReady Math and Reading assessments three times per year.

On-Site Testing Expectations

To support a secure and successful testing environment, all students participating in on-site assessments are expected to follow the guidelines below:

- **Scheduled Testing Windows:** On-site testing will take place during designated time frames. Students must arrive on time and remain on campus for the full duration of their scheduled session.
- **Early Dismissal:** If a student must leave before the end of their testing session, they must be signed out by a parent or guardian through the proper school procedures.
- **Behavior and Conduct:** During all on-site assessments, students are expected to follow the directions of testing staff and teachers. Respectful, responsible behavior helps maintain a quiet and focused environment for all test-takers.

Note: Parents/Guardians will be asked to bring students to the school site for all testing.

Student Study Team (SST)

An SST is a coordinated problem-solving approach that assists students, families, and teachers to seek positive solutions for maximizing student potential academically and/or behaviorally. It provides opportunities for school staff, parent(s)/guardian(s), and other important people in the life of the student to discuss the strengths of the student, present their concerns about the student through discussion and study, plan a positive course of action, assign responsibilities, and monitor results. The team oversees the development of plans to meet student needs without referral to assessment for special education, if/when possible. The team will monitor student progress and students can exit the SST process based on improvement.

Promotion and Retention

TK-8th grade students are evaluated for promotion by the teacher and the school administrator. The basis for promotion will be based on assessments and evaluations aligned with grade level standards. Enrollment and promotion in grades nine through twelve is based upon credits earned. Students will be placed in a grade level during enrollment based upon the criteria listed below. *Note: this does not apply to students with a credit reduction.*

9th Grade: 200-151 credits remaining to graduate

10th Grade: 150-101 credits remaining to graduate

11th Grade: 100-51 credits remaining to graduate

12th Grade: 50 or fewer credits remaining to graduate

Special Education Considerations

Individuals with identified disabilities are individuals with exceptional needs; these individuals may be eligible for accommodations and differentiated standards.

When the severity of the disabling condition(s) is/are such that the individual cannot meet the performance standards required for the general school population, an individualized education program (IEP) will be prepared for students who qualify.

High School Graduation Requirements

A student must earn a minimum of 200 credits in courses approved by the GCC for high school credit in order to graduate. The grade point average (GPA) on all credits counted toward graduation shall not be less than 1.0 on a 4.0 scale. Courses offered by the GCC for high school credit usually award five (5) credits for each course completed each semester.

The minimum of 200 credits for graduation from high school shall include:

English	40 credits
Math	20 credits
Integrated Math	10 credits
VAPA/Foreign Language	10 credits
Life Science	10 credits
Physical Science	10 credits
World History	10 credits
US History	10 credits
Economics	5 credits
Government	5 credits
Career & College Readiness	10 credits
Electives	40 credits
Physical Education	20 credits

Special Conditions Regarding Graduation Requirements

No more than 40 credits may be earned in any semester from any combination of courses without prior written permission by the school principal or designee. Note: Dual Enrollment college courses do not count in this total. A student may petition and may receive permission for a maximum of 50 credits to complete graduation requirements in the student's graduating semester.

The Superintendent or designee regularly will make available a list of specific courses approved by the GCC, which meet graduation requirements and a list of specific courses that may be taken for elective credit.

GCC Board Policy BP 14-17 Homeless and Foster Youth Graduation Requirements may be utilized in appropriate circumstances, allowing homeless and foster youth under certain extenuating circumstances to have an amended credit requirement (credit reduction).

Participation in Graduation Activities

Students who have discipline or behavioral issues may be excluded from participation in graduation.

Progress Toward Graduation

Normal progress toward graduation is defined as maintaining a minimum Grade Point Average of 1.5 or above and accumulating a minimum of: 50 credits by the beginning of the sophomore year; 100 credits by the beginning of the junior year; 150 credits by the beginning of the senior year.

Students shall complete a minimum of 25 credits per semester. The school will prepare an intervention plan for students who do not achieve the number of required credits for adequate progress.

High School Academic Guidelines

Grade Level Placement

Grade level placement is determined by years in high school for on-track students and by total credits earned for students who are credit deficient. This approach ensures consistency, supports accurate graduation planning, and aligns with state reporting expectations.

Students who are on-track to graduate with 4-year cohort

Students who are progressing as expected toward graduation in four years will follow a regular graduation path with annual grade level progression.

Grade Level Placement Based on Credits			
Year in High School	Grade Level	Regular Graduation Path	Credit Reduction Path
1st Year	9th	0-49 credits earned (200-150 credits needed)	0-49 credits earned (130-81 credits needed)
2nd Year	10th	50-99 credits earned (149-100 credits needed)	50-79 credits earned (80-41 credits needed)
3rd Year	11th	100-149 credits earned (99-50 credits needed)	80-109 credits earned (40-21 credits needed)
4th year	12th	150-200 credits earned (49-0 credits needed)	110-130 credits earned (20-0 credits needed)

Credit-Deficient Students in Regular Graduation Path

Students who have not earned the expected number of credits for their year(s) in high school are placed in the grade level that aligns with their number of credits needed. (numbers in parentheses above)

Example: A 3rd-year high school student with only 75 credits earned and needs 125 credits would be placed in 10th grade.

Students qualifying for Credit Reduction Path

California law allows certain students to be exempt from local educational agency (LEA) graduation requirements. These students are only required to meet the minimum California state high school graduation requirements. When a student qualifies under one of the approved classifications and the parent or guardian provides consent, the student is placed on the appropriate credit-reduction pathway, as outlined in the chart above.

Credits

High School Credits (Grades 9-12) – A student may earn credits in all high school courses based on mastery of all course requirements. Credits are a function of the amount of work and the breadth of study, not number of days, grades, or assignments completed. Students typically earn 25 to 35 credits during a semester, but may earn up to 40 credits each semester of enrollment. Students must earn 25 credits per semester at VA in order to graduate in four years. P

Transferability

Virtual Academy is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

VA offers courses for students interested in pursuing four-year colleges and universities as well as community colleges and career technical education trade schools. VA courses approved for A-G college admissions requirements have been submitted and approved through the University of California Office of the President (UCOP). A-G approved courses are accepted at all University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) institutions.

Transferability of credits between California high schools and out-of-state high schools is always determined by the admitting school on a case-by-case basis.

Work Permits

Students ages 14 through 17 are required by law to possess a work permit in order for them to be employed.

The school office shall issue work permits only as allowed by law and only to the extent that outside employment does not interfere with the student's school work. Work permits are issued by the school administrative office and are considered a privilege of active enrolled students. If a student withdraws or is dismissed from the program, the work permit will be revoked. In addition, if a student has attendance issues, is not completing assignments, or is not making adequate academic progress, administration may revoke the work permit and inform the employer of the situation.

Volunteer Guidelines

Gateway Community Charters (GCC) encourages and appreciates parents and community members who are willing to share their time by volunteering in our schools. Volunteers can play an important part in enriching the lives of our students. GCC cares about our students and their safety and, therefore, has created volunteer procedures and requirements to keep the children safe. All volunteers must follow the volunteer procedures and requirements of GCC. All volunteer applications can be completed online in Informed K-12. Applicants should choose the appropriate form for the correct level of volunteering, either Level 1 or Level 2. Level 1 volunteers are those that are volunteering for a one-time event on-site and will be under the direct supervision of a GCC staff member who is physically present at all times with the volunteer. Level 2 volunteers are those who volunteer more than one time and/or will be working with students without the direct supervision of a GCC staff member present at all times with the volunteer. Field trips chaperones must be approved Level 2 volunteers and as such, must meet all Level 2 requirements.

Nondiscrimination for Students and Employees (BP 06-19)

Gateway Community Charters prohibits, at any school or school activity, discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, intimidation, and bullying, based on actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, ethnic group identification, ethnicity, age, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or genetic information, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. This shall apply when applicable, to interns, volunteers, and job applicants. For questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact Equity and Title IX Compliance Officer: Dr. Erik Crawford - 5112 Arnold Ave., McClellan, CA 95652 916-286-5199, Erik.Crawford@gcccharters.org.

Staff and Student Boundaries Policy (BP 03-23)

Gateway Community Charters has an expectation that all adults maintain professional, moral and ethical relationships with students that are conducive to an effective, safe learning environment. The provisions of this policy apply to all adults relative to their conduct with students in Gateway Community Charters (GCC) schools and programs. This policy addresses a range of behaviors that include not only obviously unlawful or improper interactions with students, but also boundary-blurring and grooming behaviors that undermine the professional adult/student relationship and can lead to misconduct or the appearance of impropriety.

Boundaries Defined

For the purposes of this policy, the term “boundaries” is defined as acceptable professional behavior by staff members while interacting with a student. Trespassing beyond the boundaries of a student-teacher relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviors

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member’s point-of-view but could be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from the perspective of students or parents. There is no single reasonable person standard. The purpose of the following lists of unacceptable and acceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to or may be perceived as inappropriate, or sexual misconduct, or “grooming.” Grooming is defined as an act or series of acts by a sexual predator to gain physical and/or emotional control by gaining trust (of staff and/or family and a minor) and desensitizing the minor to various forms of touching and other intimate interaction.

Staff members must understand their own responsibilities for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Violations could subject the teacher or staff member to discipline up to and including termination. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of these established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for any required disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is critical that all employees study this policy thoroughly and apply its spirit and intent in their daily activities.

Unacceptable Behaviors

These lists (and any subsequent lists) are not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather, illustrative of the types of behavior intended to be addressed by this policy.

1. Giving gifts of a personal and intimate nature (including photographs) to a student; or items such as money, food, outings, electronics, etc. without the written pre-approval of the Principal or School Leader. It is recommended that any such gifts be filtered through the Superintendent/CEO or designee along with the rationale therefore.
2. Kissing of ANY kind
3. Massage [Note: Prohibited in athletics unless provided by massage therapist or other certified professional in an open public location. Coaches may not perform massage or rub-down. Permitted in special education only as instructed under an IEP or 504 Plan.]
4. Full frontal or rear hugs and lengthy embraces
5. Sitting students on one’s lap (grades 3 and above)
6. Touching buttocks, thighs, chest or genital area
7. Wrestling with students or other staff member except in the context of a formal wrestling program

8. Tickling or piggyback rides
9. Any form of sexual contact
10. Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation
11. Intentionally being alone with a student away from school
12. Furnishing alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs - or failing to report knowledge of such
13. "Dating" or "going out with" a student
14. Remarks about physical attributes or physiological development of anyone. This includes comments such as "Looking fine!" or "Check out that [body part]."
15. Taking or requesting photographs or videos of students for personal use or posting online
16. Either partially or fully undressing in front of a student or asking a student to undress, with the intent to view/expose private body parts
17. Leaving campus alone with a student for lunch
18. Sharing a bed, mat, or sleeping bag with a student
19. Making, or participating in, sexually inappropriate comments
20. Sexual jokes, or jokes/comments with sexual overtones or double-entendres
21. Seeking emotional involvement (which can include intimate attachment) with a student beyond the normative care and concern required of an educator
22. Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented
23. Discussing your personal troubles or intimate issues with a student
24. Becoming too involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior
25. Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities without the express, advance written permission of the Superintendent/CEO or designee and the student's parent or legal guardian
26. Being alone in a room with a student at school with the door closed and/or windows blocked from view
27. Allowing students at your home and/or in rooms within your home without signed parental permission for a pre-planned and pre-communicated educational activity which must include another educator, parent, or designated school volunteer
28. Staff mirroring the immature behavior of minors
29. Sending emails, text messages, social media responses, making phone calls, or sending notes or letters to students if the content is not about school activities. Communication via private social media accounts is not acceptable.

This policy does not prevent: 1) touching a student for the purpose of guiding them along a physical path; 2) helping them up after a fall; or 3) engaging in a rescue or the application of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or other emergency first-aid. Nor does it prohibit the use of reasonable force and touching in self-defense or in the defense of another. Restraining a child who is trying to engage in violent or inappropriate behavior is also allowed. Only such force as necessary to defend one's self, another person, or the child or to protect property is legally permitted. Excessive force is prohibited.

Acceptable Behaviors

1. Pats on the shoulder or back
2. Handshakes
3. "High-fives" and hand slapping
4. Touching face to check temperature, wipe away a tear, remove hair from face, or other similar types of contact
5. Placing TK through second grade students on one's lap for purposes of comforting the child for a short duration only
6. Holding hands while walking with small children or children with significant disabilities
7. Assisting with toileting of small or disabled children in view of another staff member
8. Touch required under an IEP or 504 Plan
9. Reasonable restraint of a violent person to protect self, others, or property
10. Obtaining formal written pre-approval from Superintendent/CEO or designee to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions, including parent's written permission and waiver form for any sponsored after-school activity whether on or off-campus
11. Emails, text-messages, phone conversations, and other communications to and with students, if permitted, must be professional and pertain to school activities or classes (communication should be initiated via transparent [non-private] school-based technology and equipment)
12. Keeping the door wide open when alone with a student
13. Keeping reasonable and appropriate space between you and the student
14. Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries, including touching legs, or buttocks,

frontal hugs, kissing, or caressing

15. Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student, such as a change in demeanor or uncharacteristic behavior
16. Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief
17. Immediately asking for advice from senior staff or administration if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries
18. Involving your direct supervisor in discussion about boundaries situations that have the potential to become more severe (including but not limited to grooming or other red flag behaviors observed in colleagues, written material that is disturbing, or a student's fixation on an adult)
19. Making detailed notes about an incident that in your best judgment could evolve into a more serious situation later
20. Recognizing the responsibility to stop "Unacceptable Behaviors" of students and/or co-workers
21. Asking another staff member to be present, or within close supervisory distance, when you must be alone with a student after regular school hours
22. Prioritizing professional behavior during all moments of student contact
23. Asking yourself if any of your actions, which could be contrary to these provisions, are worth sacrificing your job and career.

Boundaries Reporting

When any staff member, parent, or student becomes aware of a staff member (or volunteer, guest, vendor) having crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, or has a strong suspicion of "grooming behavior," he or she must report the suspicion to the Superintendent/CEO or designee promptly. "Grooming behavior" is an attempt to build an emotional and/or physical connection with a minor to gain their trust for the purpose of sexual abuse. "Suspicion" means something perceived in spite of inconclusive or slight evidence. It is based on facts that would lead a reasonable person to believe that a violation of the boundaries policy occurred. Prompt reporting of "unacceptable behaviors" observed in adult interactions with minors is essential to protect students, staff, any witnesses, and the school as a whole. When observant staff members call attention to a boundary violation(s), the likelihood of harm is greatly reduced.

Child Abuse / Sexual Abuse Reporting (Mandatory Reporting)

If, within your professional capacity or within the scope of your employment, you observe or gain possession of knowledge that a child has been a victim of child abuse or sexual abuse (or you reasonably suspect it), California Penal Code Section 11166 requires YOU to immediately report this information or suspicion directly to your county child protective agency (CPS) or local police/sheriff. The report shall be made by phone immediately, and a subsequent written report must be sent within 36 hours of your knowledge or suspicion of the abuse.

You do not need permission to report. No supervisor or administrator can impede or inhibit a report or sanction you for making the report. Your report is confidential, and you are protected from liability as long as you do not discuss the matter with anyone other than law enforcement, CPS and your school's designated responsible administrative person. Failure to meet your reporting obligation can result in a monetary fine and/or jail.

Internal reporting to the Superintendent/CEO or designee occurs after the phone-in report is made to the police/sheriff or CPS.

Internal Investigations

The Superintendent/CEO or designee will promptly communicate with the investigating enforcement agency to determine whether an investigation will be conducted by that agency. The administrator will confirm with law enforcement as to whether the initiation of an internal school investigation would interfere with any criminal investigation. Only law enforcement has the authority to grant clearance to investigate the matter administratively.

Upon receiving information from the mandated reporter, the designated responsible administrator must take immediate action to stop the alleged inappropriate conduct by removing the employee (or volunteer/vendor/guest) from the classroom or worksite when there is a potential risk to student or school safety. The Superintendent/CEO or designee shall consult with legal counsel as appropriate, prior to, during, and after conducting any investigation.

Consequences

Staff members who have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, and where appropriate, will be reported to authorities for potential legal action.

Disciplinary Physical Contact with Students

It is the policy of Gateway Community Charters (GCC) that no teacher or other staff member will use corporal punishment against a student. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, tying, taping, or the use of any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior.

Staff-Student Interactions

While the use of appropriate touching is part of daily life and is important for student development, teachers and other staff members must ensure that they do not exceed appropriate behavior. If a child or other staff member specifically requests that he or she not be touched, then that request must be honored without question.

Student Attendance Monitoring for Independent Study Schools

A key factor in supporting students to achieve their potential is ensuring strong attendance habits. Gateway Community Charters (GCC) recognizes that family connections are vital in building a solid foundation for success, and therefore seeks to develop strong communication with families. GCC will engage families in meaningful ways—not just to highlight the value of good attendance, but also to address any barriers that may prevent students from attending school.

Students with regular consistent attendance and engagement have better connections with the school community and greater success in academics. School attendance and work completion are the primary driving factors of generating revenue for the school via Average Daily Attendance (ADA).

GCC sites and staff will follow a structured process to document attendance correctly in Aeries. It begins at the school level with the School Study Team (SST) then moves to the Community Engagement Department (CED), and progresses to the Central Office through the School Attendance Review Team (SART) process. The county SARB process does not apply to independent study students. Before referral to the GCC CED or Central Office, the school site must make all reasonable efforts to address and eliminate barriers preventing the student from attending and engaging with school regularly.

The GCC will provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable pupils to complete IS successfully and will ensure that the IS pupil has the same access to all services and resources in the school in which the pupil is enrolled as is available to all other pupils in the school, including providing equipment and internet connectivity support.

Opportunities for Live Interactions and Synchronous Instruction

Synchronous instruction is defined as classroom-style instruction, small group instruction or one-on-one instruction provided in person or via live two-way communication between a credentialed teacher and the student. **Live interaction** is defined as any communication or interaction between the student and any school staff member for the purpose of school connectedness. The process for tracking interactions may differ between LEAs and must be documented.

The School shall plan to provide, at minimum, the following opportunities for live interaction and synchronous instruction for all pupils participating in independent study for 16 or more school days in a school year. Per AB 181, students are to receive live/synchronous instruction based on their current grade span:

- For pupils in transitional kindergarten through grades 1 to 3 inclusive, the school shall plan to provide opportunities for daily synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the year.
- For pupils in grades 4 to 8 inclusive, the school shall plan to provide opportunities for both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the year.
- For pupils in grades 9-12 inclusive, the school shall plan to provide opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the year.

Work Assignments for Determining ADA

For students in all programs of independent study, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be as follows:

- For pupils in transitional kindergarten/kindergarten and grades one through five, 10 days
- For pupils in grades six through twelve, 20 days

Missed Assignments and Level of Satisfactory Progress

Lack of satisfactory progress will be determined by any of the following:

1. When any student fails to complete 10 missed assignments during any period of 20 days.
2. Not generating attendance for more than 10% of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks.
3. Not participating in required synchronous instruction for more than 50% of scheduled synchronous instruction time in a school month.
4. For high school, when students are not making sufficient progress to complete at least 20 credits in a semester.
5. Lack of completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that the pupil is working on assignments.
6. Lack of mastery of required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.

If a student fails to make satisfactory progress as defined above, the School will conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study or to return to the regular school program.

School sites must follow the process outlined below for tiered interventions for student re-engagement.

At the conclusion of a full attendance period (4 weeks), any student not making satisfactory progress in any of the areas above, will be placed into the tiered reengagement process. These steps can be accelerated when there is no contact or engagement from the family at each step; but, no steps can be skipped and all interventions must be documented in AERIES interventions.

Tier 1 (Reviewed every 1-2 Weeks)

1. The Teacher of Record (TOR) calls the family to verify current contact information and review the IS Master Agreement and informs the family of lack of satisfactory progress as determined by any of the indicators above.
2. **Tier 1 letter** is emailed as a follow up to parent/guardian and/or student within 5 school days of the recording lack of satisfactory progress as determined by any of the indicators above.

Tier 2

3. After the tier 1 letter is sent home if the student continues to fail to make satisfactory progress in the following **two weeks** (*or any two week period within the same instructional term*), sites must send the **Tier 2 letter** home. This letter includes the scheduling of a conference with the family regarding the concerns related to their student's lack of satisfactory progress. This conference could be a phone call, in person conversation, or a scheduled meeting and shall reiterate the school policies around work completion and required synchronous instruction.
4. After the Tier 2 letter is mailed home and the first conference is held, if the student continues to fail to make satisfactory progress in the following **two weeks**, the school must hold a Student Study Team (SST) meeting to determine the reasons for the lack of progress. A site administrator, the teacher of record, parent, and possibly the student must attend. At the SST meeting, a re-engagement agreement must be created. Some things to consider at the SST meeting include but not limited to:
 - a. Offer flexible virtual check-ins or office hours to address concerns.
 - b. Assign study buddies or small group discussions to maintain engagement
 - c. Address possible barriers to engagement.
 - d. Modify pacing or content delivery to better suit the student's needs.
 - e. Engage family members for additional support and accountability.

Tier 3

A student is referred to tier 3 and the CED team if the student continues to demonstrate a lack of satisfactory progress as determined by any of the indicators above the following **two weeks** post SST. When the student is referred to the CED team for support, the site must first send home the parent notification letter.

Parent Notification Letter of CED Referral sent by the site and letter emailed and physically mailed to family

1. When the contract has not been successful and the student continues to fail to make satisfactory progress the case will be referred to the Community Outreach Specialist from CED.
2. A home visit will be made by the CED and a site team member. The home visit must be documented in AERIES.
3. External referrals will be made by the CED team for additional student and family support.
4. A follow-up SST meeting may be conducted by the CED Specialist and the Principal. Some things to consider at the follow up SST meeting include but not limited to:
 1. Develop a structured re-engagement contract with clear expectations and accountability.
 2. Establish additional time and days on campus with structured support.
 3. Partner with local nonprofits, youth centers, or faith-based groups that may have relationships with the family.
 4. If the student returns after a long absence, set up a re-entry plan with structured support.
 5. Scheduled time with another trusted adult at the school to support student success.
 6. Implementation of Tier 2 and Tier 3 strategies that were previously successful.

Parent Notification Letter of GCC SART Referral

1. If the student continues to fail to meet attendance requirements after the prior tiers of re-engagement, the case will be referred to the School Attendance Review Team (SART) at GCC. The SART members include some combination of the following people: Director of SpEd and Student Services, Assistant Superintendent, CED Outreach Specialist or Counselor, Student Resource Officer, a site representative, and legal counsel, when necessary. CED will make the referrals to the GCC SART on behalf of the site after Tier 2 interventions have been exhausted.
2. At this meeting, a SART contract will be signed.
3. If the family does not adhere to the SART contract, GCC may elect to work with the family to transition the student back to in-person instruction. GCC cannot guarantee enrollment availability in any school.

No Show

If a student fails to show any engagement over the first two weeks of enrollment they can be marked as a “No Show” in AERIES. This “no show” allowance does not apply to any student with an active IEP or 504.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook

Attendance

- Students are expected to be available from 8:30am to 3:30pm on all school days.
- Students must attend every scheduled class or session, on time and be prepared to work
- Student must use the school Chromebook for all classes/sessions and must have the Chromebook camera on and their face fully visible at all times.
- Attendance is based on virtual attendance and participation (with camera on and face fully visible) as well as independent work completed and submitted.
- There are no excused absences, including for medical issues/appointments as well as for internet connectivity issues/problems with technology.
- If your child cannot attend class or session, you **MUST** contact your teacher **BEFORE** your scheduled session/class time.
- Do not schedule personal appointments or family vacations during school classes/sessions.
- All students TK-8 must have a learning coach at home with them during the school day. The learning coach must be accessible by the teacher/school from 8:30am to 3:30pm on all school days.

Assignments

- Adhere to the Academic Honesty Guidelines/Code of Academic Conduct.
- Grades/credits are earned based on work completion and mastery of grade-level standards.
- Students will only use the school-issued Chromebook to attend online sessions/complete school work. The school Chromebook will only be used for schoolwork.

Assessments

- Students will participate in all school assessments, both virtual and in-person.
- Students will always put forth their best effort.

Parents/Guardians will:

- Make sure that students attend all scheduled classes and sessions and that all assessments are completed as assigned (i-Ready, CAASPP, CAST, PFT, ELPAC, etc.).
- Attend all in-person events and meetings and ensure that student is present as well.
- Supervise students at home, making sure students attend all online sessions/all assigned work is complete.
- Ensure students are completing all assigned work independently, without parent/guardian assistance.
- Ensure students have a quiet place to work, free from distractions, including cell phones.
- Keep school and teacher aware of phone number, email, and/or address changes.
- Promptly return emails and calls from the teacher and/or school.
- Contact the teacher with any questions or concerns about assignments and student progress.
- Follow through with courses of action agreed upon with school personnel with regard to the student's academic and/or behavioral progress.
- Behave and dress appropriately while at the school site and when your child is logged on to classes/sessions.
- Ensure that teachers, staff, students, and other parents are treated with kindness and respect.
- Maintain campus and school materials with respect. Parents are liable for damage and loss of materials and campus resources.
- Honesty and integrity are expected of parents in regard to all assignments and communications.
- Parents have the right to appeal any decision about student placement, school programs, or transfer by first contacting the supervising teacher and/or campus principal. If not satisfied, parents may contact Gateway Community Charters.

I hereby acknowledge that I have reviewed the information in the handbook and will adhere to the expectations.

I understand that failure to meet expectations may result in intervention meeting(s), disciplinary action, and/or termination of the Independent Study Agreement and student withdrawal from the GCC Virtual Academy.

Student Name (Print)

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date Signed