

# Gilmer Elementary



## Student Handbook 2013-2014

Mission Statement  
One Exceptional Team +  
One Exceptional Goal =  
One's Exceptional Future Success

# **“The Buckeye By-Laws”**

## **Rule 1**

When responding to any adult, you must answer by saying “Yes ma’am” or “No sir.” Just nodding your head, shrugging your shoulders or saying any other form of yes or no is not acceptable.

## **Rule 2**

Make eye contact. When someone is speaking, keep your eyes on him or her at all times. If someone makes a comment, turn and face that person.

## **Rule 3**

Use normal voice. Know when to whisper or when a loud voice is okay.

## **Rule 4**

Follow directions. Say “Yes ma’am or yes sir, do it immediately. Don’t argue.

## **Rule 5**

If you win or do well at something, do not brag. If you lose, do not show anger. Instead, say something like, “I really enjoyed the competition, and I look forward to playing you again,” or “good game,” or don’t say anything at all. To show anger or sarcasm, such as “I wasn’t playing hard anyway” or “You really aren’t that good,” shows weakness.

## **Rule 6**

“When you cough, or sneeze or burp, it is appropriate to turn your head away from others and cover your mouth with the elbow. Afterward, you should say, “Excuse me.”

## **Rule 7**

“Do not smack your lips, tsk, roll your eyes, or show disrespect with gestures.”

## **Rule 8**

“Always say thank you when you are given something. If you do not say it within 3 seconds after receiving the item, it may be taken back. There is no excuse for not showing appreciation.”

## **Rule 9**

Respect yourself, others and belongings. Ask before you borrow.

## **Rule 10**

“When you are given something from someone, never insult that person by making negative comments about the gift or by insinuating that it wasn’t appreciated”

## **Rule 11**

Make an apology by looking the person in the eye, saying you are sorry, waiting for their response and thanking them for listening.

## **Rule 12**

“Surprise others by performing random acts of kindness. Go out of your way to do something surprisingly kind and generous for someone at least once a month.”

## **Rule 13**

“Answer all questions with a complete sentence. For example, if the question asks, “What is the capital of Russia?” you should respond by writing, “The capital of Russia is Moscow.” Also, in conversation with others, it is important to use complete sentences out of respect for the person’s question. For example, if a person asks, “How are you?” instead of just responding by saying, “Fine,” you should say, “I’m doing fine, thank you. How about yourself?”

## **Rule 14**

“At times throughout the year, rewards for good behavior, academic performances and other acts worthy of praise. If you ever ask me for a reward, however, it will not be given. It is rude to ask if you are getting something for good behavior. You should be good and try your best because you are trying to better yourself, not because you are anticipating a reward.

## **Rule 15**

“Homework will be turned in each day for each subject by every student with no exceptions.”

## **Rule 16**

“When we are in transition from one subject to the other, the change will be swift, quiet and orderly

## **Rule 17**

“You will make every effort to be as organized as possible.”

## **Rule 18**

“There is to be no moaning, whining or complaining.”

## **Rule 19**

“While you are with a substitute teacher, you will obey the same rules that you follow when the teacher is with you. (I know this is hard, but it is important.)”

## **Rule 20**

“Quickly learn the name of other teachers in the school and greet them by saying things like “Good morning Mrs. Graham, or “Good afternoon Ms. Smith.” (Note: If you are in line with the rest of class, you are not allowed to speak to the teachers at that time because the no-talking rule is in effect. You should speak to other teachers if you are entering or leaving the school, on recess, on an errand, or changing classes.)

## **Rule 21**

“Do not save seats. If someone wants to sit down, let him or her. Do not try to exclude anyone. We are a family, and we must treat one another with respect and kindness.”

## **Rule 22**

“If I or any other teacher in school is speaking to or disciplining a student, do not look at that student. You wouldn’t want others looking at you if you were in trouble or being reprimanded, so don’t look at others in that situation. If you are the student I am talking to, do not get angry or fuss at students who are looking at you. Let me know and I will handle the situation.”

## **Rule 23**

“We will clean up after ourselves. This includes cleaning off the tables and making sure we haven’t left any trash on the floor. It is important to be responsible for your trash no matter where you are and to be sure not to litter.”

## **Rule 24**

“If you approach a door and someone is following you, hold the door. If the door opens by pulling, pull it open, stand to the side, and allow the other person to pass through it first, then you can walk through. If the door opens by pushing, hold the door open after you push through.”

## **Rule 25**

“During an assembly do not speak and do not look around and try to get the attention of your friends in other classes. We must uphold an image that shows we have our act together.”

## **Rule 26**

“When in a line; walk single file, two to three feet behind the person in front of you with your arms at your sides. You should face forward at all times. There will be absolutely no talking.”

## **Rule 27**

“Never cut line. If someone cuts in front of you, do not say or do anything about it. Let it happen, but let an adult know about it. If you fuss with someone who has cut in line, you could get in trouble as well. It’s not worth it; just let a teacher know what happened. Please handle all disputes with other classmates in the same manner, by going to a teacher with any problems before you take matters into your own hands.”

## **Rule 28**

“When going places, by yourself leave on time, bring what you need, leave class quietly, go straight there, greet people softly.”

## **Rule 29**

“If any child in this school is bothering you, let a teacher know. Your teacher is here to look after you and protect you. They will not let anyone in this school bully you or make you feel uncomfortable. In return, you are asked that you not take matters into your own hands. Let a teacher help you deal with the student.”

## **Rule 30**

"Stand up for what you believe in. You shouldn't take no for an answer if your heart and mind are leading you in a direction that you feel strongly about."

## **Rule 31**

"Be positive and enjoy life. Some things just aren't worth getting upset over. Keep everything in perspective and focus on the good in your life."

## **Rule 32**

"Live so that you will never have regrets. If there is something you want to do, do it! Never let fear, doubt, or other obstacles stand in your way. If there is something you want, fight for it with all of your heart. If there is something you want to do, go for it and don't stop until you make it happen. If there is something you want to be, do whatever is necessary in order to live that dream."

## **Rule 33**

"Accept that you are going to make mistakes. Learn from them and move on."

## **Rule 34**

"No matter what the circumstances, always be honest. Even if you have done something wrong, it is best to admit it to me, because I will respect that, and oftentimes I will forget any disciplinary measures because of your honesty."

## **Rule 35**

"Carpe Diem. You only live today once, so don't waste it. Life is made up of special moments, many of which happen when caution is thrown to the wind and people take action and seize the day."

## **Rule 36**

"Be the best person you can be."

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

### GISD PHONE NUMBERS

#### Administration Building

**903-841-7400**

#### Gilmer High

**903-841-7500**

#### Bruce Junior High

**903-841-7600**

#### Gilmer Intermediate

**903-841-7800**

#### Gilmer Elementary

**903-841-7700**

#### Maintenance/Transportation

**903-841-7469**

#### Cafeteria

**903-843-2149**

#### School Colors:

Black & Orange

#### Mascot:

Buckeye

**Tardy Bell**

**8:00**

**School Dismissed**

**3:25**

### People You Should Know

Principal

*John Wink*

Assistant Principals

*Adra Barnes*

*Melanie Bridges*

*Cari Traylor*

Counselor

*Stacy Winkler*

Support Services

Receptionist: *Staci Tomlin & Mary Cargil*

Secretary: *Olivia Secord*

PEIMS: *Bethaney Smith*

Deputy on Duty: *Deputy Wallace*

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## PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2012-2013! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The Gilmer ISD Student Handbook is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into two sections:

**Section I—PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**—with information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook.

**Section II—OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**—organized alphabetically by topic for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term “the student’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Gilmer ISD Student Code of Conduct, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found as an attachment to this handbook and posted at [www.gilmerisd.org](http://www.gilmerisd.org) or available in the principal’s office.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters or other communications.

In case of conflict between board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the current provisions of board policy and the Student Code of Conduct are to be followed. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact the principal.

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus the following required forms included in this handbook or provided in the forms packet accompanying this handbook:

1. Acknowledgment Form or Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook form;
2. Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Student Information Form;

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district’s policy manual is available for review in the school office or online at [www.gilmerisd.org](http://www.gilmerisd.org)

## **SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This section of the Student Handbook includes information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

#### **Working Together**

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child once your child begins enrolling in courses that earn high school credit.
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 903-841-7700 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 41.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policy GKG.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: PTO
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact Sigrid Yates at 903 841 7401.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** on page 36.]
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

#### **Parent Involvement Coordinator**

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs is Joni Elms and may be contacted at 903 841 7407.

### **PARENTAL RIGHTS**

#### **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights**

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For further information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

#### **“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities**

As a parent, you have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for your child's participation in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA.]

#### **Inspecting Surveys**

As a parent, you may inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.

#### **Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff**

You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

#### **Reviewing Instructional Materials**

As a parent, you have a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.

#### **Displaying a Student's Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work**

Teachers may display students' work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement. However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying students' artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and the like on the district's Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication. The district will also seek consent before displaying or publishing an original video or voice recording in this manner.

## **Accessing Student Records**

You may review your child's student records. These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child, and
- Teaching materials and tests used in your child's classroom

[See **Student Records** on page 22.]

## **Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student**

As a parent, you may grant or deny any written request from the district to make a video or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

- When it is to be used for school safety;
- When it relates to classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity; or
- When it relates to media coverage of the school.

## **Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom**

You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.

## **Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags**

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows.

## **Excusing a Student from Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence**

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

## **Requesting Limited or No Contact with a Student through Electronic Media**

Teachers and other approved employees are permitted by the district to communicate with students through the use of electronic media within the scope of the individual's professional responsibilities. For example, a teacher may set up a social networking page for his or her class that has information related to class work, homework, and tests. As a parent, you are welcome to join or become a member of such a page.

An employee described above may also contact a student individually through electronic media to communicate about items such as homework or upcoming tests.

If you prefer that your child not receive any one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee, please submit a written request to the campus principal stating this preference.

## **Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct**

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child's misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO(LEGAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.]

## **School Safety Transfers**

As a parent, you have a right:

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom if your child has been determined by the board or its designee to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25.0341. [See **Bullying** on page 26, and policy FFI (LOCAL).]
- Consult with district administrators if your child has been determined by the district to have engaged in bullying and the district board decides to transfer your child to another classroom.
- To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDE (LOCAL).]
- To request the transfer of your child to another campus or a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. [See policy FDE.]

## **Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings**

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children. [See policy FDB (LEGAL).]

## **Parents of Students with Disabilities**

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request that any other student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus. [See policy FDB (LOCAL).]

### ***Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education Services***

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students including a process based on Response to Intervention. The implementation of Response to Intervention has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of school districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If the evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide informed written consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of his or her rights if the parent disagrees with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the ***Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities***.

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services contact elementary principal at 903-841-7700.

## **Parents of Students who speak a Primary Language Other than English**

A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English. If the student qualifies for these extra services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

## **Accommodations for Children of Military Families**

Children of military families will be provided flexibility regarding certain district requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements.
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement.
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities.
- Graduation requirements.

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent related to leave or deployment activities may be excused by the district

Additional information may be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=7995>.

## **Student Records**

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records. Release is restricted to:

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records.

Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18, is emancipated by a court, or enrolls in a postsecondary institution, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and under limited circumstances when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.
- District school officials who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.
- Various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or other child welfare representatives, in certain cases .
- Individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

Release to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The address of the superintendent's office is 500 S. Trinity St. Gilmer, Texas 75644.

The address(es) of the principals' offices are: 1625 US HWY 271 N Gilmer, Texas 75644

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A request to

correct a student's record should be submitted to the principal. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading policy. [See FINALITY OF GRADES at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 45, and **Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns** on page 15 for an overview of the process.]

The district's policy regarding student records found at FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) is available from the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's Web site at [www.gilmerisd.org](http://www.gilmerisd.org)

The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

**Please note:**

Parents or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with federal law regarding student records. The complaint may be mailed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5901

***Directory Information***

The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about students as "directory information." This "directory information" will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, release of a student's directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year or a later date established by the district.

## **SECTION II: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact an elementary principal at 903-841-7700.

### **ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two

state laws—one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit—are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

### **Compulsory Attendance**

State law requires that a student between the ages of six and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year and is subject to compulsory attendance laws, if the student is under 21 years old. In addition, if a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See policy FEA.]

Students enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten are required to attend school.

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of a diagnostic reading instrument.

A student in grades 3–8 will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur before or after school or during the summer, if the student does not meet the passing standards on the state assessment for his or her grade level and applicable subject area.

### **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance**

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work. These include the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Service as an election clerk; and
- Documented health-care appointments, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's return to campus.

In addition, a junior or senior student's absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided the student receives approval from the campus principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed.

### **Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance**

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction, termed "accelerated instruction" by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student:

- Is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or

- Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

If the student is age 18 or older, the student's parents will not be subject to penalties as a result of their child's violation of state compulsory attendance law. [See policy FEA(LEGAL).]

#### **Attendance for Credit**

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit for the class.

If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed a plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit, if appropriate. [See policies at FEC.]

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences, whether excused or unexcused must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credit will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

#### **Documentation after an Absence**

When a student is absent from school, the student—upon returning to school—must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older or older or is an emancipated minor under state law. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the district reserves the right to require a written note.

Please note that, unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence.

#### **Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness**

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than 5 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school. Otherwise, the student's absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school in order to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused. [See policy FEC(LOCAL).]

## **BULLYING**

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic methods, or physical conduct against another student on school property, at a school-sponsored or -related activity, or in a district operated vehicle, and the behavior:

- Results in harm to the student or the student's property,
- Places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or of damage to the student's property, or
- Is so severe, persistent, and pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

This conduct is considered bullying if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator(s) and the student victim and if it interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, or ostracism. In some cases, bullying can occur through electronic methods, called "cyberbullying."

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. The district will also contact the parents of the victim and of the student who was found to have engaged in the bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's Web site. Procedures related to reporting allegations of bullying may also be found on the district's Web site. [Also see Bullying policy FFI local]

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL).

## **CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, which may be accessed in the district improvement plan. As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

A child who has experienced sexual abuse should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that disclosures of sexual abuse may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse, and it is important to be calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

As a parent, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse, the campus counselor or principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention\\_and\\_Early\\_Intervention/Programs\\_Available\\_In\\_Your\\_County/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp).

The following Web sites might help you become more aware of child sexual abuse:

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index.aspx?id=2820>

<http://sapn.nonprofitoffice.com/>

<http://www.taasa.org/member/materials2.php>

[http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml)

[http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml)

Reports may be made to:

The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400 or on the Web at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>).

Students and parents should contact the counselor for further information about automatic admissions, the application process, and deadlines.

## **COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's Web site at [www.gilmerisd.org](http://www.gilmerisd.org)

In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

## **CONDUCT**

### **Applicability of School Rules**

As required by law, the board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules. During any periods of instruction during the summer months, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

### **Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling the student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and policy FO(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual.

### **Disruptions of School Operations**

Disruptions of school operations are not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district.

## **COUNSELING**

### **Personal Counseling**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns.

### **Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment**

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

[For more information, refer to policies EHBAA(LEGAL), FFE(LEGAL), and FFG(EXHIBIT).]

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that negatively affects the student.

### **Harassment**

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student is prohibited.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

## **Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person, who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction or property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, and principal or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. See policy FFH(LOCAL) for the appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.

## **Investigation of Report**

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district.

In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

## **DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS**

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

### **Nonschool Materials...from students**

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before posting, circulating, or distributing more than ten copies of written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any nonschool material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made within two school days.

A student may appeal a principal's decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who posts nonschool material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without the principal's approval will be removed.

### **Nonschool Materials...from others**

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policy GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any nonschool material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the principal for prior review. The principal will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA, FNG, or GF.]

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a noncurriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All nonschool materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

### **DRESS AND GROOMING**

The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, and minimizes safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

- Unnatural hair coloring, or haircuts, such as Mohawks will not be permitted.
- No student will wear exposed rings, studs, or other jewelry associated with body piercings. Students may however, wear earrings or studs.
- Caps, stocking caps, visors, hoods, bandanas, or headbands will not be worn in the buildings.
- Students must wear shoes at all times. No house shoes, cleats, or shoes with wheels are to be worn. Students wearing flip flops will be restricted from certain activities.
- Midriffs must be covered at all times, whether sitting or standing and shirts must have straps large enough to cover a bra strap.
- Tops that are strapless, backless, off shoulder, halter, transparent tubes, tank tops and crop tops should not be worn.
- No student will wear boxers exposed. Sagging will not be allowed.

If the principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student will be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day, until the problem is corrected, or until a parent or designee brings an acceptable change of clothing to the school. Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES, etc.**

### **Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones**

Radios, beepers, walkmans, cameras, iPods, etc. are prohibited and will be confiscated immediately by staff members. Items will be returned at the discretion of the principal.

Students may have cell phones; however, they may not be seen or heard in the classroom or building. The following are fines/fees for confiscated cell phones.

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense:-warning and returned to the parent
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense- \$15 fee before returned to the parent
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense- \$15 fee before returned to the parent
- 4<sup>th</sup> offense-15\$ fee and the cell phone will be returned to the parent at the end of the school year.

Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parents will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE.]

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 35 and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district will not be responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices.

### **Possession and Use of Other Personal Electronic Devices**

Except as described below, students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices such as MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, e-readers, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 43 and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district will not be responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

### **Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices**

In some cases, students may find it beneficial or might be encouraged to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must obtain prior approval before using personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional use. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook). When students are not using the devices for approved instructional purposes, all devices must be turned off during the instructional day. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

### **Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources**

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in the use of district-owned technology resources for instructional purposes; specific resources may be issued individually to students. Use of these technological resources, which include the district's network systems and use of district equipment, is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

## **Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources**

Students are prohibited from sending, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement.

## **FEES**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.

## **FUND-RAISING**

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. Fund-raising is not permitted on school property unless approved by the principal or designee. [For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.]

## **GANG-FREE ZONES**

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, a student with disabilities may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her IEP.

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school, but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

[See policy FMH(LEGAL).]

Please also be aware that if an ARD committee places a student with a disability on a modified curriculum in a subject area, the student will be automatically placed in the Minimum Program, in accordance with state rules.

If a student receiving special education services is scheduled to graduate under the Minimum Program or in accordance with the provisions of his or her IEP, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the general EOC assessment is an accurate measure of the student's achievement and progress or whether an alternative assessment is more appropriate. STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate are the alternative assessments currently allowed by the state. [See **STANDARDIZED TESTING** for additional information.] If a student takes the STAAR Modified or STAAR Alternate assessment, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the score on an EOC assessment will count as 15 percent of a student's final grade, as well as whether successful performance and a cumulative score on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation.

## **HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS**

### **Bacterial Meningitis**

State law requires the district to provide information about bacterial meningitis:

- What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is common and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 2 years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. They are spread when people exchange respiratory or throat secretions (such as by kissing, coughing or sneezing).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It's a good idea not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis. The vaccines are safe and effective (85-90 percent). They can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

- What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>.

## **Food Allergies**

The district requests to be notified when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially those allergies that could result in dangerous or possibly life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic, as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, which addresses employee training, dealing with common food allergens, and specific strategies for dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies. When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment.

### **Head Lice**

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones. Because lice spread so easily, the district will need to exclude any student found to have live lice until after one treatment of an FDA-approved shampoo or cream rinse, which can be purchased from a drug store or grocery store.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent and inform the parent that the child will need to be picked up from school and will need to stay home until after an initial treatment is applied. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return.

**More information on head lice can be obtained from the TDSHS Web site at  
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm>.**

### **Physical Activity for Students in Elementary and Middle School**

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, [and FFA], the district will ensure that students in full-day prekindergarten through grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week.

For additional information on the district's requirements and programs regarding elementary, middle, and junior high school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

### **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)**

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held 4 meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from [www.gilmerisd.org](http://www.gilmerisd.org) [See also policies at BDF and EHAA.]

The duties of the SHAC range from recommending curriculum to developing strategies for integrating curriculum into a coordinated school health program encompassing school health services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, recess recommendations, and employee wellness. See policies at BDF and EHAA.

## **Other Health-Related Matters**

### ***Physical Fitness Assessment***

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3–12. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to Coach Jill Turner, or Coach Phil Pate to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

### ***Tobacco Prohibited***

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, including electronic cigarettes, while on school property at any time or while attending an off campus school-related activity.

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, by students and others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policies at FNCD and GKA.]

### ***Asbestos Management Plan***

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, and is available in the Maintenance Building office. If you have any questions, please contact Steven Schoon at 903 841 7466.

### ***Pest Management Plan***

The district applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Steven Schoon at 903 841 7466.

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Sigrid Yates at 903-841-7400.

## **IMMUNIZATION**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/default.aspx>.

The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis; measles, mumps, and rubella, (polio), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, varicella (chicken pox), and meningococcal. The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Department of State Health Services. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or a member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition.

Students entering college must now, with limited exception furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five years prior to enrolling in and attending classes at an institution of higher education.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

### **Questioning of Students**

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

### **Students Taken Into Custody**

State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

### **Notification of Law Violations**

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who is required to register as a sex offender or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

[For further information, see policies FL(LEGAL) and GRA(LEGAL).]

## **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

A student with limited English proficiency (LEP) is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for a LEP student.

In order to determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will then designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs the student will require to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student's continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR-L, as mentioned at Standardized Testing, on page 44 may be administered to a LEP student. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to LEP students who qualify for services.

If a student is considered LEP and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student's ARD committee will make these decisions in conjunction with the LPAC.

## **MAKEUP WORK**

### **Makeup Work Because of Absence**

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. [For further information, see policy EIAB(LOCAL).]

A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold in regards to the state laws surrounding "attendance for credit." [See also Attendance for Credit on page 25.]

### **DAEP Makeup Work**

A student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, a foundation curriculum course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the course through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA(LEGAL).]

### **In-school Suspension (ISS) Makeup Work**

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FO(LEGAL).]

## **MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

The district will not purchase medication to give a student. District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

- Only authorized employees, in accordance with policy FFAC, may administer:
  - Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
  - Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
  - Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
  - Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider [and to the school nurse] to the school the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse and/or principal.

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL).]

### **Psychotropic Drugs**

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policy FFAC.]

## **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Gilmer ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including CTE programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The following district representatives have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of gender: Dr. Bobby G. Rice, Director of Ancillary Services, 500 S. Trinity St. Gilmer, Texas 75644, 903 841 7810
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Kathy Musick, Director of Secondary Education. 500 S. Trinity St. Gilmer, Texas 75644, 903 841 7421.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent, Mr. Rick Albritton, 500 S. Trinity St. Gilmer, Texas 75644, 903 841 7400.

[See policies FB(LOCAL) and FFH(LOCAL).]

## **PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE**

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 29.]

State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. [See policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

## **PRAYER**

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards

In grade 1, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 percent or greater mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills in language arts, mathematics, and either science or social studies. Additional requirements include a minimum level of 14 with successful completion of summer school.

In grade 2, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on 70 percent or greater mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills in language arts, mathematics, and either science or social studies. Additional requirements include a minimum reading level of 21 with successful completion of summer school.

In grade 3-4, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards(essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in language arts, mathematics, and either science or social studies. The student will be administered a state- mandated assessment, the student will only be required to take an applicable state mandated assessment for the course in which he or she is enrolled.

## **REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES**

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every six weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance in any course is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. [See **Working Together** on page 17 for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy.

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG(LOCAL).

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject.

## **SAFETY**

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student is expected to:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.

- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

### **Accident Insurance**

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

### **Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies**

From time to time, students, teachers, and other district employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the command is given or alarm sounded, students need to follow the directions of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

### **Emergency Medical Treatment and Information**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school may have to rely on written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

### **Emergency School-Closing Information**

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early because of severe weather or another emergency.

### **Conduct Before and After School**

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

## **SEARCHES**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

### **Students' Desks**

Students' desks are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks

Searches of desks may conduct at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk...

## **Electronic Devices**

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district. [See policy CQ for more information.]

Any searches of personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated in order to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

[See policy FNF(LEGAL) for more information.]

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, dyslexic students, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact Sigrid Yates 903-841-7400.

### **STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)**

#### **Grades 3–8**

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7

- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level. For the 2011–2012 school year only, this requirement will be waived. See **Promotion and Retention** on page 45 for additional information.

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate, for students receiving special education services, will be available for eligible students, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR-L is a linguistically accommodated assessment that is available for certain limited English proficient (LEP) students, as determined by the student's Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC).

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate, for students receiving special education services, will be available for eligible students, as determined by the student's ARD committee. These particular EOC assessments may have different testing windows than the general assessments, and the ARD committee will determine whether successful performance on the assessments will be required for graduation.

STAAR-L, which is a linguistically accommodated assessment, will be available for students who have been determined to be limited English proficient (LEP) and who require this type of testing accommodation.

## **TARDINESS**

Students are considered tardy when being absent for part of the day. Students who are repeatedly tardy will be held accountable under attendance law. See page 24 for more additional information on attendance.

## **TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, AND TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT**

State-approved textbooks are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks until the item is returned or paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided textbooks for use at school during the school day.

## **TRANSFERS**

[See **School Safety Transfers**, on page 45, and **Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education Services**, on page 21, for other transfer options.]

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **School-Sponsored Trips**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

### **Buses and Other School Vehicles**

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact Amanda Parker at 903 841 7469.

See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

## **VANDALISM**

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come—littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **VIDEO CAMERAS**

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video/audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

### **General Visitors**

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the principal's office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, all parents and other visitors should be prepared to show identification.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

## **WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL**

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the principal's office.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book and equipment clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

## **LOCAL SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICIES: Overview and Action Steps**

### **Overview**

- The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 required all districts to establish local school wellness policies by School Year 2006-2007.
- The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 expands the scope of wellness policies; brings in additional stakeholders in its development, implementation and review; and requires public updates on the content and implementation of the wellness policies (Section 204).
  - The intent is to strengthen local school wellness policies so they become useful tools in evaluating, establishing and maintaining healthy school environments, and to provide transparency to the public on key areas that affect the nutrition environment in each school.

### **Summary of Action Steps for Local Educational Agencies and Districts/Schools:**

1. Review the memorandum on wellness policies: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP42-2011\\_os.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP42-2011_os.pdf).
2. Begin reviewing the local school wellness policies during School Year 2011-2012 and start implementing the new requirements.

3. Consult the resources linked below.

	<b>Old Requirements</b> <b>Child Nutrition WIC Reauthorization Act, 2004</b>	<b>New Requirements</b> <b>Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010</b>
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4. By end of SY11-12, districts and schools should also be working toward developing a reasonable method to inform and update the public about the content, implementation, and assessment of wellness policies.

### Interagency Work Group

- **Agencies involved:** U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS), working with the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, acting through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- **Interagency group:**
  - Has published a technical assistance plan outlining activities to support local educational agencies (LEAs) at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/lwp5yrplan.pdf>.
  - Will provide training and technical assistance to local educational agencies, school food authorities, and State educational agencies to meet these new requirements and establish healthy school environments that are intended to promote student health and wellness (ongoing).
  - Will identify and develop resources and training on designing, implementing, promoting, disseminating, and evaluating local school wellness policies and overcoming barriers to the adoption of local school wellness policies (ongoing).
- **FNS will publish a Proposed Rule Fall 2012.** The public will have an opportunity to comment on this rule.

### Local School Wellness Policy Resource Links

- **FNS:** <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthy/wellnesspolicy.html>.
  - On an ongoing basis, FNS will be updating these materials to reflect the new requirements; these materials are a useful starting point for LEAs working to strengthen their local school wellness policies to meet the requirements of the new law.
- **CDC:** <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/wellness.htm>
  - The CDC website includes resources to assist districts in designing, implementing and promoting elements of local school wellness policies.
  - *School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity* is a resource that presents guidelines for developing, implementing, and evaluating school-based healthy eating and physical activity policies and practices for K-12<sup>th</sup> grade students. There is also a series of strategies to facilitate implementation of the guidelines <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/npao/strategies.htm>

### Comparison Chart of the 2004 and 2010 requirements for local school wellness policies (LWP)

<b>Overview</b>	<b>Directs local educational agencies (LEAs) to have in place a LWP for each school under its jurisdiction.</b>	<b>Strengthens LWPs and adds rules for public input, transparency, and implementation.</b>
<b>Elements of the Local School Wellness Policy</b>	LWP to include, at a minimum, goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities to promote student wellness, as well as nutrition guidelines for all foods available on school campus.	In addition to the 2004 requirements, the LWP is also to include goals for <u>nutrition promotion</u> .
<b>Stakeholder Involvement</b>	LEAs are required to involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators and the public in the development of LWP.	In addition to the 2004 requirements, LEAs are now required to permit <u>teachers of physical education</u> and <u>school health professionals</u> to participate in the development of LWP.
<b>Stakeholder Participation</b>	The stakeholders named above are required to participate in the development of the LWP.	In addition to the 2004 requirements, LEAs are now required to permit <u>all stakeholders named above and in 2004</u> to participate in the <u>implementation and periodic review and update</u> of LWP.
<b>Local Discretion</b>	LEAs can determine the specific policies appropriate for the schools under their jurisdiction, provided that those policies include all required elements specified in the Act.	Same as 2004 requirement.
<b>Public Notification</b>	None.	LEAs are required to inform and update the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) about the content and implementation of the LWP.
<b>Measuring Implementation</b>	LEAs are required to establish a plan for measuring implementation of the LWP.	LEAs are required to measure periodically and make available to the public an assessment on the implementation of LWP, including the extent to which schools are in compliance with LWP, the extent to which the LWP compares to model LWP, and to describe the progress made in attaining goals of LWP.
<b>Local Designation</b>	LEAs are required to establish a plan for measuring implementation of the LWP, including designation of one or more persons within the LEA or at each school, as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the LWP.	LEAs are required to <u>designate one or more LEA officials or school officials</u> , as appropriate, to ensure that each school complies with the LWP.

## GLOSSARY

**Accelerated instruction** is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level and/or as a result of a student not meeting the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

**ACT** refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the American College Test. The test may be a requirement for admission to certain colleges or universities.

**ARD** is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student and his or her parents are members of the committee.

**Attendance review committee** is sometimes responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit lost because of absences.

**DAEP** stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

**EOC assessments** are end-of-course tests, which are state-mandated, and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments will be required for graduation beginning with students in grade 9 during the 2011–2012 school year. These exams will be given in English I, English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, World Geography, World History, and United States History.

**FERPA** refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

**IEP** is the written record of the individualized education program prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or districtwide tests; whether successful completion of state-mandated assessments is required for graduation, etc.

**ISS** refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

**LAT** stands for linguistically accommodated testing, which is an assessment process for recent immigrant English language learners who are required to be assessed in certain grades and subjects under the NCLB Act.

**NCLB Act** is the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

**PGP** stands for Personal Graduation Plan , which is recommended for all students entering grade 9 and is required by state law for any student in middle school or higher who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

**SAT** refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

**SHAC** stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to assist the district in ensuring that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction.

**Section 504** is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

**STAAR** is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments, effective beginning with certain students for the 2011–2012 school year.

**STAAR Alternate** is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

**STAAR Modified** is an alternative state-mandated assessment based on modified achievement standards that is administered to eligible students receiving special education services, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

**STAAR Linguistically Accommodated (STAAR L)** is an alternative state-mandated assessment with linguistic accommodations designed for certain recent immigrant English language learners.

**State-mandated assessments** are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the grade 11 exit-level test or end-of-course assessments, when applicable, is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

**Student Code of Conduct** is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom or campus. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

**TAKS** is the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the state's standardized achievement test currently given to students in certain subjects in grades 10 and 11 and is required for graduation for students at these grade levels. .

**TELPAS** stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language, and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

**TxVSN** is the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors, and courses are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

# Gilmer Elementary School

## Discipline Management Plan

### MISSION STATEMENT: Mission Statement

One Exceptional Team +

One Exceptional Goal=

One's Exceptional Future Success

#### **A. Expectations of Appropriate Student Behavior**

1. Students may not disrupt the learning process, the teachers' lessons, or prevent another student from learning.
2. Students may not use put-downs or physically hurt anyone.
3. Students must keep hands and feet to themselves.
4. Students may not damage their own property, school property or other's property.
5. Students must walk quietly and orderly to assigned places.
6. Students must respect and obey all staff members.
7. Students must not use vulgar language, offensive gestures or drawings.

#### **B. Expectations of Successful Student Work Habits**

1. Observe all behavior rules in Section A.
2. Listen attentively.
3. Use time wisely.
4. Follow directions.
5. Bring proper materials and keep them orderly.
6. Return and complete ALL class assignments on time.
7. Actively participate in class.

#### **C. Expectations for Recess Behavior**

1. Observe all behavior rules in Section A.
2. Walk to the playground quietly.
3. Follow all staff directions.
4. Students must keep hands and feet to themselves.
5. Refrain from play-fighting games.
6. Report any problems to a teacher or staff member.

#### **D. Expectations for Hallway, Cafeteria and Restroom Behavior**

1. Observe all behavior rules in Section A.
2. Do not talk in the hall or restroom.
3. Talk quietly when in the cafeteria.
4. Walk anywhere you go on campus.

5. Students must keep hands and feet to themselves.
6. All classes must walk in lines when going anywhere on campus.
7. Show pride in your school by keeping the halls, restrooms and cafeteria clean.
8. Report any problems to a teacher or a staff member.

**E. Expectations for Transportation (Before and After School)**

1. Observe all student rules in Section A.
2. Walk to assigned place and have a seat.
3. Do not talk so that you can listen for directions for your ride.
4. Follow directions of the staff members.
5. Students must keep hands and feet to themselves.

**F. Expectations for Knowing the CHAMPs**

1. In every classroom and location throughout the building, CHAMPs are posted. CHAMPs are expectations for student behavior in every location throughout the building. Students are expected to follow the CHAMPs every day.
2. C – Conversation: Is conversation or talking allowed in this activity and if so, may students talk or must they whisper while doing this activity?
3. H – Help: How can students get questions answered during this activity/transition? How can students get the teacher's attention?
4. A – Activity: What is the task/or objective in this activity/or transition? What is the expected end product?
5. M – Movement: Can students move about during this activity or transition and if so, how can they move?
6. P – Participation: What does appropriate student behavior for this activity or transition look and sound like? How do students show that they are fully participating?

# **GES Discipline Management Plan**

The Discipline Management Plan will be used by Gilmer Elementary School for any major or minor violations in the coming school year. The purpose of this plan is to prevent behavior problems from occurring by identifying reasons for the inappropriate behavior. The goal of this plan is to involve teachers, counselors, support staff, principals, and parents in helping student's exhibit appropriate behavior in order for them to achieve their potential academically.

Minor violations are offenses that are disruptive to the learning process and are covered in student expectations and individual classroom rules. Minor offenses include, but are not limited to tardies, dress code violations, repeated disruptions, and other similar offenses.

Major violations are offenses that involve injury to another, vulgar language, bullying, sexual harassment and other offenses listed in the Chapter 37 Student Code of Conduct. Fighting will have a separate set of consequences.

*Student's discipline records will begin at Step Zero each 9-week period (all records are cleared except for fights).* The purpose of this policy is to encourage students to behave according to the expectations set by the school.

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## **Inappropriate Behavior Discipline Plan**

**Step One:** Level One (1<sup>st</sup> minor offense) – Student visits with the teacher or teacher team for 1<sup>st</sup> minor offense. Parent communication is required. Teacher will assign and document consequences for student.

**Step Two:** Level Two (2<sup>nd</sup> minor offense) – Student visits with the teacher or teacher team for 2nd minor offense. Parent communication is required. Teacher will assign and document consequences for student.

**Step Three:** Level Three (3<sup>rd</sup> minor offense) – Student visits with the teacher or teacher team for 3rd minor offense. Phone call to parent is required. Teacher will assign and document consequences for student.

**Step Four:** 1<sup>st</sup> major offense or 4<sup>th</sup> minor offense will result in a referral to assistant principal. Campus punishment will be assigned. Phone call to parent by assistant principal required. Students must satisfactorily complete the campus consequence before being returned to classroom.

**Step Five:** 2<sup>nd</sup> major offense or 5<sup>th</sup> minor offense will result in a referral to assistant principal. Campus punishment will be assigned. Phone call to parent by assistant principal required. Students must satisfactorily complete the campus consequence before being returned to classroom.

**Step Six:** 3<sup>rd</sup> major offense or 6<sup>th</sup> minor offense will result in a referral to principal. Campus punishment will be assigned. Phone call to parent by assistant principal required. Students must satisfactorily complete the campus consequence before being returned to classroom

**Step Seven:** 4<sup>th</sup> major offense or 7<sup>th</sup> minor offense will result in a referral to principal. Phone call to parent or parent conference **required** with Principal and Assistant Principal. Suspension or placements in DAEP are all possible consequences for this level.

## **Inappropriate Behavior Discipline Plan Explanation**

- ❖ There are times when serious infractions will result in the student being sent directly to the office. Examples of serious infractions are: severe disrespect to a teacher or other officials, profanity, fighting, insubordination, and other violations addressed in Chapter 37 of the Student Code of Conduct.
- ❖ In the case of severe disciplinary infractions, the seven-step disciplinary progression may be circumvented by administration. (Ex. Fighting equals ISS or suspension)

## **Fights or Physical Altercations**

Fighting is not permitted at any GISD school. If any student engages in a physical altercation with another student that results in harmful physical contact, he/she will be immediately removed and may receive any of the following consequences: ISS, Suspension, DAEP placement.

### **ISS (In-School Suspension)**

ISS is an alternative placement for students who break school rules. It is a structured environment with high expectations for both behavior and academics. Students who are assigned to ISS must adhere to the following rules:

1. Students will complete all ISS assignments before beginning regular classroom assignments, and all assignments must be completed.
2. Students will not talk to anyone without permission from instructor.
3. Students will not disrupt the ISS classroom.
4. Students will not be allowed to sleep or lay their head down on the desk. Student must always sit up tall and stay busy while in the ISS classroom.
5. Students will not write on the desks or walls.
6. Students must face forward at all times while in ISS.
7. Students must obey commands of ISS Attention (right hand clasping wrist of left arm behind back, standing tall, looking forward) at all times when given by instructor.
8. Students must maintain good behavior in ISS or they will be assigned more days.
9. Students breaking ISS rules or not completing ISS assignments or classroom assignments will be given EXTRA DAYS of ISS or placed in Discipline Alternative Education Placement School.

## Appropriate Behavior Encouragement Plan

We believe that students must be recognized when they exhibit appropriate behavior and rewarded if they are to continue exhibiting appropriate behavior. We also believe that students can achieve more if they feel comfortable asking for help from teachers and staff. At Gilmer Elementary School, the Appropriate Behavior Encouragement Plan provides many ways through which students can be recognized for doing good things for other people. These things can be, but are not limited to: helping others when they need help, using proper manners, letting a teacher know about a problem, exhibiting improvement in grades or behavior, and performing any other positive behavior.

Incentive programs include:

1. **Buckeye Bucks**—Students who exhibit appropriate classroom behavior and work ethic will receive these cards. Buckeye Bucks may be redeemed at the Buckeye Store to buy items to be sold during lunch the day of a CHAMP's Assembly and to be placed in the drawing for gift certificates and prizes.
2. **Teacher incentive programs** —Each teacher may establish a behavior incentive program. This program may include but is not limited to: office runners, special time for movies, or other positive incentives chosen by the teacher.
3. **Campus incentives programs**- Campus and grade level reward celebrations that encourage positive behavior

### NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA FOR GILMER ISD:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, provides parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day Gilmer ISD receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or student of the time and place the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or students may ask Gilmer ISD to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. Parents should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or

misleading. If Gilmer ISD decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or the student, Gilmer ISD will notify the parent or student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or student when notified of the rights of a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by Gilmer ISD as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member, including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel; a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom Gilmer ISD has contracted to perform a special task, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, Gilmer ISD discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. [Note: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the students of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records in request.]
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

**Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
600 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605**

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND RIGHTS:**

*Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school, a partnership that thrives on communication. Parents are partners with teachers, administrators, and the Board and are encouraged to:*

- 1. Encourage your child to put a high priority on education and commit to making the most of the educational opportunities provided.**
- 2. Attend Board meetings to learn more about District operations, including the procedure for addressing the board when appropriate. Regular board meetings are scheduled for the third Monday of each month at the Central Office located on Trinity Street.**
- 3. Review the information in the Student Handbook, including the attached Student Code of Conduct, with your child, and sign and return the acknowledgement form(s). Parents with questions are encouraged to contact the school office.**
- 4. Become familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs offered in the district. Discuss with the principal any questions, such as concerns about placement, assignment, or early graduation, and the options available to your child. Monitor your child's academic progress and contact teachers as needed.**
- 5. Exercise your right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other aids, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.**
- 6. Review your child's student records when needed. You may review attendance records, test scores, grades, disciplinary records, counseling records, psychological records, applications for admission, health and immunization information, teacher and counselor evaluations, reports of behavioral patterns, and state assessment administered to your child.**
- 7. If an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate interferes with your religious or moral beliefs, you may temporarily remove your child from the classroom. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend an entire semester. If your child is removed, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by TEA.**
- 8. Become a school volunteer. For further information, contact the campus.**
- 9. Participate in campus parent organizations. The activities are varied, ranging from band boosters to improving educational opportunities for all students. For further information, contact the school office.**
- 10. Any student who becomes a victim of a violent criminal offense while on the grounds of a campus, the parent is entitled to transfer their child to a safe campus under Legal/Local Policy FDD.**

## **Gilmer ISD Parental Involvement Policy**

### **Statement of Purpose**

Gilmer ISD is committed to providing quality education for every child in our district. To this end, we desire to establish partnerships with parents and the community.

We believe that everyone gains if the school and home work together to promote high achievement by our children. Neither segment can do this task alone. Parents play an extremely important role as a child's first teacher. Their support for their children and the school is vital to their children's success.

We offer an integrated curriculum that is taught by an innovative staff and supported by involved parents and community members. All students are expected to work toward mastering the objectives established by the state curriculum (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills). We recognize that some students will need extra assistance to achieve their full potential. A Title I School receives federal assistance to supplement and expand the required curriculum and services as mandated by the Texas Education Agency. Any student on a Title I campus is eligible for this extra assistance if he/she meets the selection criteria.

This parental involvement policy is developed to support our partnership with our parents. This policy represents input from parents and is available to all parents of our children.

### **Parent and Community Input in Policy Development**

Our Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is comprised of parents, community members and staff members. They have the responsibility of annually reviewing and revising this policy. Any changes are shared with the District Team to receive input from this group.

The district actively recruits volunteers for each of these committees through various forms of publicity. Committee selections provide a diverse group of stakeholders that is representative of the community.

Meetings are held at times and locations convenient to all members. If a translator is needed, one will be provided when possible. A copy of the District Parent Involvement policy is available on the district's website.

### **Parent Involvement Activities to Improve Achievement and School Performance**

One of the functions of the PAC and Ace Committee will be to identify means for the district to provide assistance and support for the campuses to create effective parent involvement. The administration will assist schools in understanding the requirements of Title I, Part A and in planning for effective programs to assist parents in improving academic achievement.

District assistance may also consist of the distribution of informational handouts which explain state academic standards, assessments and curriculum. The district will promote and encourage staff

development on establishing effective relationships with parents as a means to increase academic achievement.

### **Building Capacities for Strong Parent Involvement**

The district will support a variety of parental involvement strategies as it strives to develop and maintain an optimum learning environment.

#### **A. Annual Parent Meeting**

An annual meeting is held to review Title I guidelines and services provided by the district. Copies of the current Parent Involvement Policy are available at the meeting. Parents are encouraged to become involved in revising and updating the policy as necessary, and parent volunteers are invited to become members of the PAC and the District and Campus Teams. The meeting is held at a convenient time and location. Notice of the meeting is published in the local newspaper and is posted on the district's website. If necessary, a translator will be available.

#### **B. Home/School Compact**

In accordance with Title I regulations, each campus has developed a home/school compact which is reviewed annually. The compacts explain how students, parents and staff share responsibility for student performance and success, and will enable them to do so. Each Campus Team is responsible for reviewing and providing revisions as needed. All parents are given a copy of the compacts at the annual Parent-Teacher Conference Day held on each campus. Teachers, parents and students are encouraged to discuss the contents of the compact. They are also encouraged to sign that they have received a copy of the compact.

#### **C. Staff/Parent Communication**

Parents are informed of school activities through a variety of different means of communication throughout the school year. Newsletters, conferences, notices on the district's website, articles in the local newspaper, school marquees, personal contacts and written notices are used to establish and maintain an open line of communication. Staff development includes strategies to promote effective parent involvement activities. Each year an article is published in either the local newspaper or in Gilmer ISD Newsletter that outlines parent involvement opportunities.

#### **D. Parent Training**

Each year the district provides parents opportunities for training. Topics covered in the training sessions are based on interest expressed by parents. Surveys are sent home each year so that parents can provide input into topics that are of interest to them.

#### **Evaluation**

A meeting is held near the end of the school year where parents are encouraged to review and evaluate all aspects of the parent involvement policy. These suggestions are collected and presented to the PAC to be incorporated into the policy. Other information made available are results of the annual parent survey, student survey and any other pertinent findings. The PAC makes revisions to the policy as needed.

### **District Initiated Communication and Meetings**

1. Campuses notify parents of their children's eligibility for special programs and educational services.
2. Gilmer ISD News, the district newsletter, is published quarterly in conjunction with the local newspaper.
3. Progress reports are sent to parents during the 4<sup>th</sup> six weeks of each grading period.
4. Report cards are issued at the end of each six weeks grading period.
5. Access to student grades and attendance through the use of Edline.
6. Teachers email address listed on the school website under "Staff Directory."
7. Teachers are available for conferences with parents. These may be scheduled by calling the office of the appropriate school.
8. At the first meeting of the Gilmer Parent Teacher Organization, parents will be provided an opportunity to ask questions about any of the district's programs for its students.
9. Notices are also posted on the district's website [www.gilmerisd.org](http://www.gilmerisd.org).
10. Other communications consist of notices, mailings, phone calls, and conferences

### **Opportunities for Involvement**

1. A volunteer program has been established at Gilmer ISD. Persons interested in serving as volunteers should contact Joni Elms at 903-841-7407.
2. Membership in Advisory Councils/Committees
  - \*Parent Advisory Council (PAC)
  - \*Senior Parents
  - \*Local Health Committee
  - \*District and Campus Teams

Persons interested in serving on one of these groups should contact a building principal or the Administration Building. Parents will have an opportunity to be involved in the development of policies and practices through activities such as participation on one of the councils/committees, teams, meetings and/or suggestions emailed to the Parent Involvement Coordinator. The PAC has the responsibility of evaluating the effectiveness of the district parent involvement policy. The District Team evaluates the effectiveness of federal and other programs. Meetings are held periodically to accommodate and encourage greater parent involvement. A meeting is held near the end of the school year to allow parents to provide input concerning the effectiveness of the Title Programs and to plan for them for the following year.

3. Participation in Booster/Parent Organizations such as
  - \*Athletic
  - \*Choir
  - \*Band
  - \*FFA
  - \*Gilmer Elementary PTO
  - \*Gilmer Intermediate PTO

Membership is open to anyone interested in any of these organizations. Information may be obtained by contacting the appropriate school office.

4. The annual parent survey conducted by the district.

2013-2014 Gilmer Elementary  
Acknowledgment of Student Handbook

My child and I have received a copy of the Gilmer Elementary Student Handbook. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year. And that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. (Code of Conduct sent separately) If I have any questions regarding this handbook or the Code, I should direct those questions to the principal at 903-841-7700.

Printed name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_