Georgia Digital School by K12®

LEARNING WITHOUT LIMITS.
EXCELLENCE WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026-2027

LEARNING WITHOUT LIMITS.

EXCELLENCE WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

PREPARING TODAY.
EMPOWERING TOMORROW.

1486 GA Hwy-74 Unit 6A (Box 333)
Tyrone, GA 30290

https://gds.k12.com/

School Color: Purple & Gold
Mascot: The Gryphon

This handbook contains important information regarding school policies, procedures, student expectations, and family responsibilities. Parents, guardians, Learning Coaches, and students are encouraged to review this handbook together. Enrollment in Georgia Digital School signifies agreement to comply with the policies and expectations outlined herein.

HANDBOOK NOTICE

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are adopted by Georgia Digital School and are intended to comply with applicable federal laws, Georgia law, State Board of Education Rules, and Thomasville City Schools policies.

Georgia Digital School reserves the right to revise this handbook as necessary to comply with changes in law, State Board Rule, Georgia Department of Education guidance, Thomasville City Schools policies, or operational requirements. Families will be notified of significant revisions through official school communication channels.

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Attention Parents and LCs

Please click this link to complete this form

Parent/ Student Handbook Acknowledgement

Welcome to Georgia Digital School
Executive Director's Welcome

Dear Students, Parents, Guardians, and Learning Coaches,

Welcome to Georgia Digital School (GDS).

We are honored that you have chosen to become part of our school community.
Georgia Digital School was founded on the belief that every student deserves access to an exceptional educational experience regardless of where they live. Through innovative virtual instruction, meaningful relationships, and high expectations, we prepare students to become confident learners, responsible citizens, and future leaders.

As a statewide public virtual school operating in partnership with Thomasville City Schools, we are committed to providing rigorous instruction, personalized learning opportunities, and individualized support that prepare every student for college, career, military service, and life.

Success in a virtual learning environment requires a strong partnership among students, parents, Learning Coaches, teachers, administrators, and support staff. Through open communication, shared accountability, and mutual respect, we believe every student can thrive.

This handbook has been developed to serve as a resource for understanding school expectations, policies, procedures, and available supports. We encourage every family to review it carefully and refer to it throughout the school year.

We look forward to partnering with you during an outstanding school year.

Sincerely,
Dr. Nakia McCall
Executive Director
Georgia Digital School

SECTION 1- School Overview

Georgia Digital School (GDS) is a statewide public virtual school serving students in grades 6–12 through a partnership with Thomasville City Schools.

Our instructional model combines the flexibility of online learning with the structure, accountability, and support expected of a Georgia public school.

Students receive instruction from Georgia-certified educators through a combination of:

- Live synchronous instruction
- Independent learning
- Small-group instruction
- Individualized intervention
- College and career readiness experiences
- Student support services

Our virtual environment allows students to engage in rigorous academics while receiving individualized support designed to meet their unique learning needs.

Mission

Georgia Digital School partners with families to provide a high-quality virtual education that empowers every student through personalized learning, meaningful relationships, and exceptional teaching—preparing them for success in college, career, military service, and life.

Vision

Georgia Digital School strives to be Georgia's leading virtual public school where personalized learning, innovation, strong relationships, and educational excellence inspire every student to learn without limits and achieve their fullest potential.

Core Beliefs

At Georgia Digital School, we believe:

- Every student deserves access to an exceptional education.
- Strong relationships are essential to student success.
- Families are valued educational partners.
- High expectations produce high achievement.
- Personalized learning empowers students to reach their fullest potential.
- Every student can be prepared for college, career, military service, and life.

School Governance

Georgia Digital School operates through a partnership with Thomasville City Schools and complies with all applicable federal and state laws governing public education.

The school operates in accordance with:

- Georgia Department of Education regulations
- Georgia State Board of Education Rules
- Thomasville City Schools Board Policies
- Applicable federal education laws
- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act
- Title IX of the Education Amendments

Nothing contained in this handbook supersedes applicable federal or state law.

Equal Educational Opportunity

Georgia Digital School provides equal educational opportunities for all students without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, or any other protected classification as provided by law.

The school is committed to maintaining a learning environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and retaliation.

School Leadership	
Role	**Contact**
Executive Director	**Dr. Nakia McCall • nmccall@georgiadigital.org**
Principal	**Mrs. Brandi Beavers • bbeavers@georgiadigital.org**
Operations Manager	**Mrs. Kris Rosenquist • krosenquist@georgiadigital.org**
Special Programs Academic Administrator	**Dr. Jasmine Sadler • jsadler@georgiadigital.org**
CTAE Academic Administrator	**Mr. Cody Moncrief • cmoncrief@georgiadigital.org**

Communication Expectations

Timely communication between school personnel and families is essential to student success.

Georgia Digital School communicates through:

- School email
- Telephone
- Text messaging
- Canvas Learning Management System
- Student Information System (PowerSchool/Infinite Campus)
- School newsletters
- Smore communications
- School website

Parents, guardians, and Learning Coaches are responsible for maintaining current contact information and regularly reviewing school communications.

School Calendar

Georgia Digital School follows the official Thomasville City Schools Board-approved calendar for the 2026–2027 school year.

The annual calendar includes:

- First and last day of school
- Holidays
- Teacher workdays
- School breaks
- Grading periods
- State testing windows
- Professional learning days

The most current version of the calendar is available on the [Georgia Digital School website.]

GEORGIA DIGITAL SCHOOL

2026-2027 SCHOOL CALENDAR

JULY 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1			4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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AUGUST 2026						
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NOVEMBER 2026						
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DECEMBER 2026						
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FEBRUARY 2027						
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MARCH 2027						
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MAY 2027						
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JUNE 2027						
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27	28	29	30			

Start/End of School | Start/End of Grading Periods | Teacher Preplanning/ Post-planning | School Closed for All | Teacher Workday/ Student Holiday

July 2-3, 2026	Independence Day Holidays
July 13-31, 2026	Preplanning (Teachers)
August 3, 2026	First Day for Students
September 7, 2026	Labor Day Holiday
October 5, 2026	Teacher Workday/Student Holiday
October 12-16, 2026	Fall Break
November 23-27, 2026	Thanksgiving Holidays
December 21, 2026 – January 1, 2027	Winter Holidays
January 4, 2027	Teacher Workday/Student Holiday
January 5, 2027	First Day, Third Nine Weeks
January 18, 2027	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 12, 2027	Teacher/Student Holiday
February 15, 2027	Presidents' Day Holiday
March 11, 2027	Teacher Workday/Student Holiday
March 12, 2027	Teacher/Student Holiday
March 15, 2027	First Day, Fourth Nine Weeks
April 5-9, 2027	Spring Break
May 26, 2027	Last Day for Students
May 27-28, 2027	Post-planning (Teachers)
June 1-3, 2027	Post-planning (Teachers)
May 31, 2027	Memorial Day Holiday

GRADING PERIODS

Academic Standards
At Georgia Digital School (GDS), we believe every student can achieve success through rigorous, personalized learning. Students are challenged to think critically, solve problems, and actively engage in live instruction, coursework, and collaborative learning experiences.
Our teachers use ongoing assessments and individualized support to monitor progress and help students meet or exceed the Georgia Standards of Excellence. In return, students are expected to participate consistently, produce high-quality work, and take ownership of their learning as they learn without limits.

High-Quality, Standards-Aligned Curriculum
Georgia Digital School partners with Stride K12 to provide a rigorous, engaging, and personalized curriculum aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) and state graduation requirements. Developed by experienced educators, curriculum specialists, instructional designers, and subject matter experts, the Stride K12 curriculum is designed to meet the diverse needs of today's learners while promoting academic excellence and college and career readiness.

Our curriculum supports students with a wide range of learning styles, abilities, and goals. Whether students seek advanced academic challenges, require flexible scheduling, or benefit from individualized instruction and additional support, GDS provides a learning experience that is both personalized and structured to help every student succeed.

Through interactive lessons, meaningful learning experiences, and data-driven instruction delivered by highly qualified Georgia-certified teachers, students develop the knowledge, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills needed for success in high school, college, career, and life. At Georgia Digital School, we are committed to helping every student learn without limits while achieving their highest academic potential.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program
Georgia Digital School (GDS) is committed to preparing students for success in college, careers, and life through Georgia's Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) program. CTAE courses provide students with opportunities to explore career interests, develop technical and employability skills, and connect classroom learning to real-world experiences.

Middle School (Grades 6–8)
Middle school students participate in career awareness and exploration through introductory courses that develop digital literacy, career planning, financial literacy, and essential workplace readiness skills. These experiences help students identify their interests and begin planning for future high school pathways and postsecondary opportunities.

High School (Grades 9–12)
High school students may enroll in Georgia-approved CTAE pathway courses that prepare them for college, technical college, military service, apprenticeships, and the workforce. Students have opportunities to complete career pathways, participate in work-based and project-based learning experiences when available, earn industry-recognized credentials, and qualify for dual enrollment opportunities.

To meet Georgia Board of Education graduation requirements, students must earn at least one unit of CTAE, Fine Arts, or World Language credit. Students who complete a state-approved CTAE pathway may qualify for additional recognition and enhanced postsecondary and career opportunities. Through CTAE, GDS equips students with the academic, technical, and professional skills needed to thrive in an ever-changing workforce while preparing them to learn without limits.

Career and Technical Education Program Opt-Out
Students in grades 6-12 are automatically opted into GDS's Career and Technical Education Program due to the learning benefits for this group of students as well as supporting progress toward graduation requirements for students in grades 9-12 as outlined by the GA Department of Education. While students in grades 9-12 may not opt out of graduation requirements, all students in grades 6-12 may opt out of being identified as a Career and Technical Education Program student. To do so, Legal Guardians, Students over the age of 18 or Legally Emancipated Students over the age of 16 may submit the CTAE Opt Out Choice Form have the program ended for their student. If you would like more information about opting out, please contact the CTE coordinator, Mr. Cody Moncrief at cmoncrief@georgiadigital.org

Student Promotion
Student promotion is based on teacher recommendations. It is the responsibility of the School Principal to make final grade level placement decisions.

For students with special needs, promotion will also depend on the fulfillment of the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The academic expectations at GDS will be made clear to parents. Additionally, as stated above, teachers and the administration will be diligent in their efforts to keep parents up to date on their children's performance. When a child is in danger of failing, teachers will reach out to the parent

or guardian to discuss the child's circumstances and develop strategies that the child, parents, and teachers can implement to afford the child opportunities to succeed.

Retention
For students transferring to GDS, the student will be placed in the grade level as recommended by their previous school. A retention letter/label may be required.

Testing Schedule
GDS will administer all required Georgia State Tests. In addition, all GDS students will participate in Progress Learning Check-Ins, 3 times a year for year long classes and twice a semester for semester courses. Parents and students will receive specific information for any required in-person tests prior to each testing event.

Testing Compliance
GDS will conduct standardized testing as required by state and federal law and provide remediation and intervention for students not scoring at required levels. A testing coordinator will monitor compliance with this policy and will ensure that all testing material is maintained under locked and secure conditions. Students who refuse to participate in mandatory state testing will not be able to re-enroll the following school year. All testing personnel, teachers, and school administrators are subject to a state Testing Code of Ethics regarding the statewide testing program. For questions regarding testing requirements, please contact our Testing Coordinator, Mrs. Ashley Peterson, apeterson@georgiadigital.org.

Student Evaluation/Grading
All parents will be informed at regular intervals on their children's academic progress, based on procedures approved by the School Administration. The academic year will consist of two eighteen-week grading periods. Progress reports are issued at the end of the first and third grading period, and official report cards will be issued at the end of the second grading period for yearlong courses and the end of the semester for semester courses. Parents can access student information via the Parent Portal at any time, including student grades and progress within courses. A date will be sent to parents to check grades during the interim of each grading period in the Parent Portal. A paper copy progress report will not be sent home. Report cards will be a combination of numerical and narrative evaluations. Grades for students in 6th Grade – 12th Grade will be calculated as follows:

Grade Mark	Percentage
A	90% – 100%
B	80% – 89%
C	70% – 79%
F	0% – 69%

Report Cards
Report cards are generated from the Student Information System. Parents have online Student Information System access to view the academic records through the parent portal.

Academic Accountability

Students at GDS are responsible for:

a. Completing assignments within time limits acceptable to the teacher and administration.
b. Participating actively in all classes and class-related activities
c. Making academic progress by passing, in addition to iReady, NWEA, Progress Learning Checkins, EOG, and EOC assessments, all courses required for promotion to the next grade level.
d. Maintaining, being responsible for, and producing in all classes, at all times, necessary materials such as assigned textbooks, writing materials, and class supplies, and using these materials in an appropriate manner.

Plagiarism and Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Plagiarism is the attempt to pass off the ideas, research, theories or words of others as one's own. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Most students know when they are intentionally plagiarizing, for example copying an entire essay of a book or buying a paper off the Internet. See the Code of Conduct for more information.

SECTION 2- Student & Family Expectations

Our Shared Commitment

Student success at Georgia Digital School is built upon a collaborative partnership among students, parents, guardians, Learning Coaches, teachers, administrators, and support staff. Every member of the school community shares responsibility for creating a positive, safe, respectful, and academically rigorous virtual learning environment.

Enrollment at Georgia Digital School signifies a commitment to actively participate in the educational process and to comply with the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in this handbook.

Student Responsibilities

Students enrolled at Georgia Digital School are expected to:

- Attend all required live instructional sessions.
- Participate actively in learning activities.
- Complete assignments by established deadlines.
- Demonstrate academic honesty and integrity.
- Maintain respectful communication with teachers, staff, and classmates.
- Follow the Student Code of Conduct and Technology Use Policy.
- Protect usernames, passwords, and school-issued technology.
- Participate in required state and local assessments.
- Seek assistance when academic or personal challenges arise.
- Represent Georgia Digital School positively during virtual instruction and school-sponsored activities.

Students are expected to take increasing ownership of their learning while developing the skills necessary for success in college, career, military service, and life.

Parent, Guardian, and Learning Coach Responsibilities

Georgia Digital School recognizes parents, guardians, and Learning Coaches as essential partners in the educational process.

Parents and Learning Coaches are expected to:

- Ensure students attend school consistently.
- Support daily participation in instructional activities.
- Provide an appropriate learning environment conducive to academic success.
- Monitor student attendance, grades, and academic progress.
- Review school communications regularly.
- Maintain current emergency contact information.
- Communicate concerns promptly with appropriate school personnel.
- Encourage positive digital citizenship and appropriate technology use.
- Ensure students participate in all required assessments.
- Review and comply with the policies outlined in this handbook.

The level of daily supervision may vary depending upon the student's age, maturity, and individual needs; however, parental engagement remains an essential component of student success throughout enrollment.

Partnership Between Home and School
Georgia Digital School believes education is most effective when families and school personnel work together through mutual respect, shared responsibility, and open communication.
Families are encouraged to:

- Attend school meetings and informational sessions.
- Participate in parent conferences.
- Complete school surveys.
- Engage in school improvement activities when opportunities are available.
- Communicate regularly with teachers and school staff.
- Support student attendance and academic achievement.

Family feedback is valued and will be used to strengthen instructional programs, student services, and overall school operations.

Communication Expectations
Effective communication is essential to maintaining a successful virtual learning environment.
Georgia Digital School communicates with families through:

- School email
- Telephone calls
- Text messaging
- Canvas Learning Management System
- Student Information System (PowerSchool/Infinite Campus)
- School newsletters and Smore communications
- School website
- Official school social media platforms, when applicable

Parents, guardians, and Learning Coaches are responsible for reviewing school communications regularly and maintaining accurate contact information with the school.

Emergency Contact Information
Parents or guardians are responsible for notifying the school immediately whenever there is a change to:

- Home address
- Mailing address
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Emergency contacts
- Legal custody status
- Medical information affecting student safety

Failure to maintain current contact information may delay communication during emergencies or other important school matters.

Legal Custody
If a parent or guardian has a court order regarding custody, guardianship, restraining orders, or educational decision-making authority, copies of the current court documents must be provided to the school immediately.

Unless otherwise directed by a valid court order, Georgia Digital School will recognize the educational rights of both parents in accordance with Georgia law.

STUDENT & PARENT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

To accomplish our mission, GDS requires the support and cooperation of the parents and guardians of our students. GDS has the following expectations of its students, parents, and families.

Student success is achieved through a collaborative partnership among:

Students →Parents →Learning Coaches →Teachers

The Home/School Compact (agreement) can be found in the appendix.

Chain of Communication

Georgia Digital School encourages families to resolve questions and concerns at the lowest appropriate level before requesting administrative review.

Concern	Primary Contact
Classroom Instruction	Classroom Teacher
Assignments and Grades	Classroom Teacher
Attendance	Classroom Teacher or Registrar
Scheduling	School Counselor
Student Records	Registrar
Technology	Technology Support
Student Behavior	Classroom Teacher or Principal
School Operations	Operations Manager
Unresolved Concerns	Executive Director

Most concerns can be resolved quickly through open communication with the appropriate staff member.

Resolving Concerns

Georgia Digital School values respectful and timely resolution of concerns.
Families are encouraged to follow the process below:

Step 1 – Teacher Resolution

Parents or guardians should first communicate directly with the classroom teacher whenever concerns involve classroom instruction, assignments, grading, attendance, or student performance.
Whenever appropriate, teachers will work collaboratively with families to resolve concerns and, if necessary, refer families to the appropriate school personnel.

Step 2 – Principal Review

If a concern cannot be resolved at the classroom level, or if the concern involves the classroom teacher, families should contact the Principal, Mrs. Brandi Beavers at bbeavers2@georgiadigital.org

The principal will review the concern, gather relevant information, and work collaboratively toward an appropriate resolution.

Step 3 – Executive Director Review

If the concern remains unresolved after review by the Principal, families may request review by the Executive Director.

The Executive Director's review represents the final administrative level for resolving routine concerns before initiation of the formal grievance process.

Parent and Student Grievance Process

Most questions or concerns regarding classroom instruction, student services, or school operations can be resolved through the Chain of Communication described above.

A formal grievance should be reserved for situations in which a parent or student believes a school employee has violated:

- Georgia Digital School policy;
- Thomasville City Schools Board policy;
- applicable Georgia law; or
- applicable federal law.

Filing a Formal

Before filing a formal grievance, the parent, legal guardian, or eligible student must demonstrate that reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the concern through the school's established chain of communication.

A formal grievance may be submitted only after the following steps have been completed:

Step 1 – Teacher Resolution

The parent or student must first attempt to resolve the concern directly with the appropriate classroom teacher or staff member.

Step 2 – Principal Review

If the concern is not resolved, the parent or student should submit the concern in writing to the Principal, who will review the matter, conduct any necessary investigation, and provide a written response.

Step 3 – Executive Director Review

If the matter remains unresolved after the Principal's review, the parent or student may request a meeting with the Executive Director.

The Executive Director will:

- Review all documentation related to the concern;
- Meet with the parent or student, when appropriate;
- Consult with school personnel as necessary; and
- Provide a written decision.

A formal grievance must be submitted within **ten (10) business days** following the Executive Director's written decision.

Submitting a Formal Grievance

A formal grievance must:

- Be submitted in writing;
- Clearly describe the issue;
    - Identify the school policy, governing district policy, or law that is alleged to have been violated;
- Include documentation showing that Steps 1–3 have been completed; and
- State the resolution being requested.

Grievances should be submitted to the Executive Director by email or certified mail.

Grievance Review

Within **ten (10) business days** of receiving the grievance, the Executive Director will determine whether:

- The grievance meets the requirements of this policy;
- All prior steps have been completed; and
- Additional investigation is necessary.

If additional information is required, the Executive Director may request supporting documentation from the parent, student, or school staff.

Written Decision

The Executive Director will issue a written decision within **fifteen (15) business days** after receiving all necessary documentation unless additional time is required due to the complexity of the matter.

The written decision will include:

- Findings of fact;
- Applicable school, district, or state policies;
- Any corrective actions, if warranted; and
- The final administrative determination.

Appeal to the Governing District

If the parent or student believes the grievance has not been resolved after the Executive Director's decision, they may submit a written appeal to the **governing district, Thomasville City Schools**, in accordance with applicable district policies and procedures.

The decision of the governing district shall be considered final.

Parent and Family Engagement

Georgia Digital School is committed to meaningful family engagement in accordance with:

- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Georgia Department of Education Family Engagement Framework
- Thomasville City Schools Family Engagement expectations

Family engagement opportunities include:

- Parent workshops
- Family information sessions
- Academic conferences
- Advisory opportunities
- Volunteer opportunities, when appropriate
- Parent surveys
- Continuous school communication

Annual family feedback will be used to improve instructional programs, student supports, school climate, and overall school operations.

Home–School Partnership Agreement

As partners in education, Georgia Digital School, students, parents, guardians, and Learning Coaches share responsibility for supporting student achievement and maintaining a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment.

The Home–School Partnership Agreement, located in the Appendix, outlines the shared commitments of students, families, and school personnel and must be acknowledged as part of the enrollment process.

SECTION 3 - Academics & Instruction

Academic Program

Georgia Digital School (GDS) provides a rigorous, standards-based virtual instructional program aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), Georgia Department of Education requirements, and Thomasville City Schools curriculum expectations.

Instruction is delivered by Georgia-certified teachers through a combination of:

- Live synchronous instruction
- Independent asynchronous learning
- Teacher-led small-group instruction
- Individualized intervention
- Enrichment opportunities
- College and career readiness experiences

Students are expected to actively participate in all required instructional activities and complete coursework in accordance with teacher expectations and established deadlines.

Academic Programs

Georgia Digital School offers a comprehensive instructional program for students in grades 6–12 that may include:

- Core Academic Courses
- Honors Courses
- Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE)
- Advanced Placement (AP), when available
- World Languages
- Health and Physical Education
- Elective Courses
- Credit Recovery
- Dual Enrollment (when eligible)
- Gifted Education
- Special Education
- English Learner (EL) Services
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Course availability may vary based on enrollment, staffing, and state requirements.

Instructional Model

Georgia Digital School combines the flexibility of online learning with the accountability of a public school.

Students are expected to:

- Attend scheduled live instructional sessions.
- Participate actively during instruction.
- Complete independent assignments.
- Participate in intervention or enrichment when assigned.
- Communicate with teachers regarding academic concerns.
- Demonstrate consistent academic engagement.

Instruction is designed to provide meaningful interaction between students and teachers while supporting individualized learning needs.

Academic Standards

Students are expected to perform to the highest level of their individual ability while demonstrating responsibility, perseverance, and integrity.

Teachers monitor student progress through multiple measures including:

- Daily assignments
- Projects
- Quizzes
- Unit assessments
- Teacher observations
- Benchmark assessments
- Georgia Milestones Assessments
- Progress monitoring
- Intervention data

Academic progress is reviewed regularly to identify students who may benefit from additional instructional support.

Grading and Student Evaluation

Student grades reflect mastery of the Georgia Standards of Excellence and course expectations.

Grades are determined using multiple measures of student learning, which may include:

- Class assignments
- Discussions
- Projects
- Assessments
- Performance tasks
- Unit tests
- Teacher observations
- State-required assessments, when applicable

Teachers will communicate grading expectations through course syllabi and Canvas course pages.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued at the conclusion of each grading period in accordance with the official school calendar.

Report cards provide information regarding:

- Course grades
- Academic progress
- Attendance
- Teacher comments, when applicable

Parents and students are encouraged to review report cards promptly and contact teachers with any questions regarding student performance.

Promotion and Retention
Student promotion and retention decisions are made in accordance with:
- Georgia law
- Georgia State Board of Education Rules
- Thomasville City Schools policies
- Georgia Digital School academic requirements

Promotion decisions consider multiple factors, including:
- Academic performance
- Mastery of grade-level standards
- Completion of required coursework
- Attendance and engagement
- Required state assessments, when applicable

Retention decisions are made on an individual basis after careful review of available academic data and interventions.

Graduation Requirements
Students pursuing a Georgia high school diploma must successfully complete all graduation requirements established by:
- Georgia State Board of Education
- Georgia Department of Education
- Thomasville City Schools

Graduation requirements include successful completion of required units of credit, state assessment requirements when applicable, and all local graduation expectations.
Students should work closely with their assigned school counselor regarding graduation planning.

Academic Integrity
Georgia Digital School is committed to maintaining the highest standards of academic honesty. Students are expected to complete all coursework independently unless collaboration has been specifically authorized by the teacher.
Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:
- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Unauthorized collaboration
- Copying another person's work
- Sharing answers
- Falsifying academic records
- Impersonating another individual
- Submitting work completed by another person
- Unauthorized use of technology or artificial intelligence

Violations of academic integrity undermine the educational process and may result in disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)
Georgia Digital School recognizes that emerging artificial intelligence technologies can support learning when used responsibly and with teacher authorization.
Unless specifically permitted by the classroom teacher, students shall not use generative artificial intelligence tools to:

- Complete graded assignments
- Generate essays or written responses
- Solve assessments
- Produce original work submitted for academic credit
- Misrepresent AI-generated work as their own

When AI tools are authorized for instructional purposes, students must comply with teacher expectations regarding attribution, citation, and responsible use.
Unauthorized AI use may be considered academic dishonesty.

Academic Honesty Procedures
When concerns regarding academic integrity arise, school personnel may:

- Review submitted work.
- Compare student work with available sources.
- Meet with the student.
- Contact the parent or guardian.
- Require resubmission of work when appropriate.
- Assign academic consequences consistent with school policy.
- Implement disciplinary consequences when warranted.

Repeated violations may result in progressively more serious disciplinary action.

Testing and Assessments
Participation in required assessments is an expectation of enrollment at Georgia Digital School.
Students are required to participate in all applicable:

- Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments (EOG)
- Georgia Milestones End-of-Course Assessments (EOC)
- ACCESS for English Learners
- Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA), when applicable
- Local benchmark assessments
- District-required assessments
- College and career readiness assessments, when applicable

State assessments may require students to report to designated in-person testing locations.
Failure to participate in required assessments may affect school accountability measures and may result in additional intervention or administrative action as permitted by state law and Georgia Digital School policy.

Academic Support
Georgia Digital School provides academic support through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) designed to identify and address student learning needs.
Support services may include:

- Small-group instruction
- Individual intervention
- Tutoring
- Progress monitoring
- Counseling support
- Academic conferences
- Credit recovery opportunities
- Special education services
- English Learner services

The level and type of support provided will be based upon individual student needs and available educational data.

College and Career Readiness

Georgia Digital School is committed to preparing every student for success beyond high school. Students have opportunities to develop:

- College readiness
- Career awareness
- Workforce skills
- Leadership
- Digital citizenship
- Communication skills
- Critical thinking
- Problem-solving

Instruction emphasizes real-world application of academic knowledge while supporting each student's individualized postsecondary goals.

SECTION 4 - Attendance, Student Engagement, and Enrollment

Attendance Philosophy

Regular attendance and active participation are essential components of student success in a virtual learning environment. Georgia Digital School expects students to engage consistently in both synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences and to meet all attendance, participation, and course completion requirements established by Georgia law, the Georgia Department of Education, Thomasville City Schools, and Georgia Digital School.

Attendance in a virtual setting is measured by documented participation in instructional activities, completion of assigned coursework, communication with teachers, and compliance with state and local attendance requirements.

Compulsory Attendance

Georgia's compulsory attendance law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1) requires every child between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) who has not completed the requirements for a high school diploma to attend a public school, private school, or approved home study program.
Enrollment at Georgia Digital School carries the same compulsory attendance requirements as enrollment in any other Georgia public school.

> *In accordance with Rules and Regulations 160-5-1-.02 from the State of Georgia, GADCA will provide educational services to students. This will equate to a daily average of 5.5 hours (330 minutes) of instructional time based on a 180-day school year. The school calendar will include 180 instructional days for students, which will consist of both synchronous and asynchronous instruction.*
>
> *GDS will afford students 24/7 access to the online school's curriculum and lessons throughout the school year. Students will be expected to log into the online school every official school day. Daily schedules may vary day to day contingent upon lesson length and individual student needs. The current calendar is published annually on the school's website.*

Parents, guardians, and Learning Coaches are responsible for ensuring their student participates regularly in school.

Attendance Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Log into school every scheduled instructional day.
- Attend all required live instructional sessions unless excused.
- Complete assigned coursework by established deadlines.
- Participate in teacher-directed instructional activities.
- Respond to teacher communications in a timely manner.
- Participate in intervention sessions when assigned.
- Complete required assessments.

Attendance is determined through documented participation in instructional activities and is not based solely upon logging into a device.

Instructional Time
Georgia Digital School provides instructional time consistent with Georgia State Board of Education requirements.
Instruction consists of a combination of:

- Live teacher-led instruction
- Independent learning
- Guided practice
- Small-group instruction
- Individual conferences
- Intervention and enrichment

Students are expected to actively engage in instructional activities throughout each scheduled school day.

School Hours
Although instruction occurs virtually, students are expected to participate according to their assigned schedules.
General instructional hours are:
Monday–Thursday Student instructional day begins at **8:00 a.m.**
Friday Modified instructional schedule beginning at **9:30 a.m.**
Teachers may assign additional intervention, conferences, office hours, or support sessions based upon needs.

Digital School (GDS) Tardy Policy

Students are expected to attend all required live instructional sessions and arrive on time. Regular, punctual attendance supports academic success and active participation in the virtual classroom.

Excused tardies may be granted for documented medical or dental appointments, court appearances, or other circumstances approved by the school. Parents or guardians should notify the teacher as soon as possible and provide appropriate documentation when requested. If a student becomes ill or must leave a live session early, the parent or guardian should notify the teacher via email.

Students who have not Patterns of excessive tardiness may result in attendance interventions and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with Georgia Digital School attendance procedures.

Student Tardiness

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.2 and Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10, Georgia Digital School establishes the following policy regarding student tardiness. Georgia law requires each local board of education to adopt attendance procedures that include policies relating to tardiness; however, neither Georgia law nor State Board Rule defines the number of minutes that constitutes a tardy. Accordingly, Georgia Digital School adopts the following standard.

Definition of Tardy - A student is considered tardy if they are more than five (5) minutes late to the scheduled start of any required synchronous instructional session, live lesson, advisory, intervention, or other mandatory school activity without an approved excuse.

Students who log in within five (5) minutes of the scheduled start time will not be considered tardy but are expected to make every effort to arrive on time.

Progressive Interventions

To encourage consistent attendance and maximize instructional time, the following interventions will be implemented for unexcused tardies during each semester:

- 3 unexcused tardies: Parent/guardian notification by the teacher.
- 5 unexcused tardies: Parent/guardian conference and development of an attendance improvement plan.
- 7 unexcused tardies: Administrative intervention, which may include loss of privileges, detention (if applicable), or other school-based consequences.

Continued excessive tardiness

Additional interventions may be implemented in accordance with the Georgia Digital School Student Code of Conduct and Board policy. When permitted under Board-approved attendance procedures, excessive unexcused tardiness may be considered in attendance determinations.

Excused Tardies

Tardies resulting from verified illness, medical appointments, documented technical issues beyond the student's control, or other reasons recognized under Georgia Digital School's attendance policy may be excused when appropriate documentation is provided.

Parent and Student Responsibility

Students are expected to be logged into the required instructional platform and prepared to participate before the scheduled start of class. Parents/guardians are encouraged to support punctual attendance and communicate promptly with the school regarding circumstances that may result in late arrival.

This policy is adopted in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.2 and Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10 regarding local attendance protocols and policies relating to student tardiness.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Parents or guardians should notify the school whenever a student is unable to participate due to illness or another legitimate reason.

- Documentation may be requested when appropriate.
- Excused absences may include reasons recognized under Georgia law and Thomasville City Schools attendance procedures.

Unexcused absences include failure to participate in required instructional activities without an approved reason.

Tardiness

Students are expected to arrive on time for all live instructional sessions.
Repeated tardiness may interfere with academic progress and may result in parent communication, intervention, or additional attendance support.

Student Engagement

Successful participation in virtual learning requires more than attendance.
Students are expected to demonstrate ongoing engagement through:

- Participation during live instruction
- Submission of assignments
- Communication with teachers

- Completion of assessments
- Participation in intervention when assigned
- Academic progress consistent with course expectations

Failure to maintain meaningful engagement may result in attendance interventions or administrative review.

Attendance Intervention

When attendance or engagement concerns arise, Georgia Digital School will implement graduated interventions designed to support student success.

Interventions may include:

- Teacher outreach
- Parent communication
- Attendance conferences
- Academic support
- Counseling referrals
- MTSS interventions
- Student Success Plans
- Administrative review

The goal of intervention is to remove barriers to student participation whenever possible.

Truancy

Students who accumulate unexcused absences may be considered truant in accordance with Georgia law. Georgia Digital School will follow applicable state law and Thomasville City Schools procedures regarding truancy notification, parent conferences, required documentation, and referrals. Parents and students are encouraged to communicate proactively with school personnel before attendance concerns become chronic.

Continued Engagement Requirements

Enrollment in Georgia Digital School requires students to maintain active participation throughout the school year.

Students who fail to demonstrate ongoing academic engagement may be subject to continued engagement procedures.

Indicators of non-engagement may include:

- Failure to log into courses for extended periods.
- Failure to submit assignments.
- Failure to respond to teacher communication.
- Failure to attend required instructional sessions.
- Failure to participate in required interventions.
- Lack of academic progress.

School staff will attempt multiple contacts and provide intervention before considering administrative withdrawal.

Administrative Withdrawal
A student may be administratively withdrawn when permitted by Georgia law and school policy due to circumstances including, but not limited to:

- Failure to maintain enrollment requirements.
- Extended non-engagement.
- Failure to respond to repeated communication.
- Failure to satisfy compulsory attendance requirements.
- Enrollment in another educational program.
- Other circumstances permitted by state law or Thomasville City Schools policy.

Whenever possible, families will receive written notification before administrative withdrawal occurs.

Parents or guardians may appeal an administrative withdrawal by submitting a written request to the Georgia Digital School Executive Director or designee. After reviewing the appeal and supporting documentation, the Executive Director will either uphold or overturn the withdrawal decision.

If the withdrawal is upheld, a final appeal may be submitted in accordance with partner district policies. While an appeal is pending, students are expected to continue meeting all attendance and engagement requirements unless otherwise directed by the school.

Withdrawal Procedures
Parents or guardians who wish to withdraw a student should notify Georgia Digital School as soon as possible.
The school will provide information regarding:

- Withdrawal documentation
- Records transfer
- Device return
- Final grades
- State reporting requirements

Parents with students in need of withdrawing from the school must contact our family engagement specialist, Ms. Crawford, in writing via e-mail at schooloffice@gerogiadigital.org and complete a Docusign form requesting the withdrawal. Once the withdrawal has been processed, learning coaches and/or legal guardians will be emailed return labels for materials, computers, printers, and hotspots (if applicable) for equipment that was furnished to the student. Additional return labels can be requested through this link: https://www.help.k12.com/s/article/UPS-Return-Shipping-Labels

Georgia Digital School follows Georgia Department of Education requirements regarding student transfers and enrollment reporting. Students withdrawn without evidence of enrollment in another educational program may be subject to compulsory attendance reporting requirements under Georgia law.

IMPORTANT: By law, if a student withdraws or is withdrawn and no proof of transfer to another districted school, charter school, private school, or home school declaration is received by the records department within forty-five(45) days of withdrawal, then the student will be referred to DFCS (Department of Family and Children's Services). Proof of registration at another school or a homeschool declaration must be sent to schooloffice@georgiadigital.org prior to forty-five (45) days to avoid referral to DFCS.

Attendance Appeals
Families may request review of an administrative withdrawal or attendance determination by submitting a written request to the Executive Director within the timeframe established by school procedures.
The Executive Director or designee will review all available information before issuing a final administrative determination. Nothing in this procedure limits rights afforded under Georgia law.

State Assessment Attendance
Attendance during state assessment windows is mandatory.
Students must report to designated testing locations for all required in-person assessments, including:

- Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade (EOG)
- Georgia Milestones End-of-Course (EOC)
- ACCESS for English Learners
- Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA)
- Other state-required assessments

Failure to participate in required assessments may result in additional intervention and may affect school accountability measures.

SECTION 5

Student Conduct and Discipline

Philosophy of Student Conduct

Georgia Digital School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, inclusive, and academically focused learning environment that supports student success.

Student discipline is intended to promote responsible decision-making, encourage positive behavior, teach self-discipline, and maintain an environment conducive to learning. Whenever appropriate, disciplinary actions will emphasize education, restoration, and behavior improvement while protecting the safety and well-being of the school community.

Nothing contained in this handbook limits the authority of Georgia Digital School to address conduct that substantially disrupts the educational environment or violates applicable law or school policy.

Student Code of Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects respect for themselves, others, and the Georgia Digital School community.

Students shall:

- Demonstrate honesty and integrity.
- Treat others with courtesy, dignity, and respect.
- Follow the directions of teachers and school personnel.
- Protect school property and technology.
- Participate appropriately during virtual instruction and school-sponsored activities.
- Respect the rights and learning opportunities of others.
- Comply with all school policies and applicable laws.

These expectations apply during:

- Live virtual instruction
- Small-group instruction
- School-sponsored activities
- Field trips
- Testing sessions
- School communication platforms
- School-issued technology
- Any conduct that substantially impacts the school environment.

Positive Behavioral Expectations

Georgia Digital School encourages students to:

- Demonstrate respect.
- Accept responsibility.
- Practice academic integrity.
- Communicate appropriately.
- Show digital citizenship.
- Resolve conflicts appropriately.
- Support a positive learning environment.

Positive student behavior contributes to a productive educational experience for all members of the school community.

Prohibited Conduct
The following behaviors are prohibited and may result in disciplinary action:
Disruption
- Disrupting instruction.
- Refusing reasonable staff directions.
- Interfering with the learning of others.

Inappropriate Language or Conduct
- Profanity.
- Obscene or vulgar language.
- Derogatory comments.
- Threatening language.
- Intimidation.

Harassment
- Harassing students or staff.
- Discrimination.
- Retaliation.
- Sexual harassment.
- Cyber harassment.

(See **Section 8: Safety, Harassment, and Bullying**.)
Bullying
Bullying, cyberbullying, intimidation, hazing, and retaliation are prohibited.
(See **Section 8: Bullying and Harassment Policy**.)
Violence
- Fighting.
- Assault.
- Threats of violence.
- Physical aggression.

Property Violations
- Damage to school property.
- Theft.
- Vandalism.
- Unauthorized access to school systems.

Academic Misconduct
- Cheating.
- Plagiarism.
- Unauthorized AI use.
- Impersonation.
- Academic fraud.

(See **Section 3: Academic Integrity**.)
Technology Misuse
- Sharing passwords.

- Unauthorized access.
- Downloading prohibited software.
- Circumventing security.
- Misuse of school technology.

(See **Section 6: Technology Use Policy**.)

Dress Code

Georgia Digital School expects students to dress appropriately during:

- Live instructional sessions when cameras are required.
- School-sponsored activities.
- Field trips.
- Testing.
- School events.

Clothing must:

- Be appropriate for an educational environment.
- Not contain offensive language or images.
- Not promote drugs, alcohol, tobacco, violence, gangs, or illegal activity.
- Not substantially disrupt instruction.

Students participating in school-sponsored activities or appearing on camera may be asked to change attire that does not comply with this policy.

Outings/Events

GDS sponsors optional outings for students and families on a regular basis that enhance the Stride K12 curriculum/learning activities. While attendance is not mandatory, it is a wonderful opportunity to meet other school participants and have conversations about our children and programs and share practices that work. Outings are opportunities for both the students and parents to socialize. Parents are responsible for the cost of transportation and any entrance fees associated with optional outings. While credit for field trips is not offered in lieu of the regular curriculum for most outings, attendance at these events can be included under an applicable subject area. Parents/ Legal Guardians must complete the Liability and Photo release form for their student to fully participate and attend outings and events.
Parents/Guardians are required to remain with students at all GDS outings. Students may NOT be dropped off at any outing. Students who are of driving age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to attend an outing.

Students and parents are to abide by the code of conduct listed earlier in this handbook. Tobacco products, drugs, alcohol, and weapons of any kind are not permitted on school outings or events. If these circumstances arise, they will be dealt with in accordance with this handbook and all applicable state laws. GDS parents and students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all optional outings. Parents are responsible for supervision of their children at all times. Any other group outings are not considered “official” outings unless a GDS staff attends.

Students are expected to dress appropriately when attending outings. Examples of inappropriate dress include but are not limited to:

- Clothing, apparel, or jewelry that by words, signs, pictures, or any other combinations thereof, advocates or promotes sexual activity, violence, death, suicide, or the use of alcohol or drugs, or demeans, degrades, or intimidates another because of race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, or gang membership.
- Apparel that reveals or exposes the midriff/lower back or sides of the upper body or torso and/or undergarments.
- Any clothing that is excessively tight, is of transparent material, see-through material, or that is ripped or torn, or has suggestive signs or symbols.
- Any clothing through which underwear or any type of undergarment maybe seen.
- Spandex, clothing that does not cover backs, clothing that permits viewing of cleavage, halter tops, tank tops with open sides, spaghetti strap tops, and muscle/tank shirts.
- Spikes, dog chains/chokers, ball bearing chains, wallet chains, or other jewelry that increases the risk for accidents.

  Questions regarding regional outings should be relayed to our School Community Engagement Specialist, Ms. Crawford at ccrawford@georgiadigital.org.

Student Photos

Parents who do not wish to allow GDS to use their child's picture or image must fill out the Photo Release form, please email ccrawford@georgiadigital.org for that link.

Student Searches

To maintain a safe educational environment, backpacks, bags, or personal belongings brought to school-sponsored events, testing locations, or field trips may be subject to search when permitted by law and school policy.

School-issued technology may also be inspected consistent with applicable law and the Technology Use Policy.

Student Discipline

Disciplinary decisions are made after considering:

- Age and maturity
- Severity of the offense
- Prior disciplinary history
- Intent
- Safety concerns
- Applicable state law
- Individual student circumstances

Georgia Digital School is not required to implement progressive discipline when the seriousness of the offense warrants a more significant consequence.

Possible Disciplinary Responses

Disciplinary actions may include:

- Verbal warning
- Parent notification
- Teacher conference

- Student conference
- Restorative practices
- Behavior contract
- Loss of privileges
- Required intervention
- Administrative conference
- Temporary removal from instructional activities
- Suspension
- Recommendation for expulsion when authorized by law

Nothing in this handbook limits disciplinary action required by Georgia law.

Student Offense	School Action Options
Academic Honesty: Plagiarism, unethical use of AI, cheating on coursework and/or standardized testing (see below for more detailed explanation of consequences to offenses).	GDS students are required to attend, complete, and submit all work as their own for all schoolwork and State assessments. Teachers closely monitor academic integrity in all areas. If a student is found to have plagiarized, cheated, or falsely identified themselves, the GDS teacher will intervene immediately to research the possible infraction. A meeting may be scheduled by GDS faculty or staff, with GDS administration, possibly leading to disciplinary consequences.
Assault, verbal threats, or intimidation, **Prohibition of Fighting** Students shall refrain from mutual confrontations involving physical contact with any members of the school community.	• Discuss incident with student. • Hold a disciplinary meeting with parents/guardians, student, and staff members. • Suspend student from school privileges. • Suspend from school if above interventions are not effective. Expulsion may occur.
Bullying of any kind (in-person or cyber) based on race, gender, color, national origin, or disability.	• Discuss incident with student. • Hold a disciplinary meeting with parents/guardians, student, and staff members. • Suspend student from school privileges. • Suspend from school if above interventions are not effective. Expulsion may occur.
Inappropriate behavior or actions during Class Connect sessions:	The GDS teacher has full control over privileges within the online sessions. A student misbehaving may be removed from the session without warning. The student will have a follow- up conference regarding this matter and disciplinary consequences may follow. The school has the right to trace the IP address and retrieve contact information from any person signing into the online classroom.

Inappropriate Computer Use: Specific procedures, conditions, and legal restrictions guide the use of school-owned computers. Parents should review appropriate usage of computers with their students before using school computers. Parents are the responsible adult for logging into the computer and should maintain a confidential user password.	Depending on the misuse of the school computer, the Academic Administrator or Executive Director will determine disciplinary consequences, including loss of privileges up to expulsion
Disrespectful Behavior or Inappropriate Conduct: Students and parents are expected to comply with reasonable directives of school personnel in a timely and cooperative manner. Any refusal to comply or any use of profane means of expression toward other students or school personnel will be assigned a range of consequences.	• Discuss incident with student. • Hold a disciplinary meeting with parents/guardians, student, and staff members. • Suspend student from school privileges. • Suspend from school if above interventions are not effective. Expulsion may occur.
Attire: GDS students are to dress appropriately during Class Connect sessions, staff led sessions, outings, or other school events. Parent support is critical in the effort to maintain a productive academic atmosphere. Shirts and blouses must cover the midriff, chest, and back. Pants, skirts, and tops should be high enough and long enough, so no portion of the backside or undergarments is seen.	Students may be asked to change clothing, turn it inside out, or leave the CC session or premises. Backpacks or handbags may be subject to search at school events, outings, or testing. • Depending on circumstances, an administrative meeting may follow.
Mandate of Academic Honesty Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their work. Violation of this includes but is not limited to: • Copying work from another person • Plagiarizes work of another • Using answer keys provided for learning coach • Copies work from internet sources without proper citations • Forges notes Shares test questions with others	**First Incident** • Express concerns and provide concrete examples of dishonesty. • (6-8) Allow students to redo assignment and resubmit for a grade. (9-12) Citation submissions can be resubmitted. **Second Incident** • Hold a disciplinary meeting with parents/guardians, student, and staff members. • All second incident assignments receive a 50%. **Third Incident** • Hold a disciplinary meeting to discuss ways to eliminate academically dishonest behaviors. All second incident assignments receive a 0%.
Abuse of Computer or Internet Privileges Students shall respect the computer privileges granted to them. Violations include: • Gives his/her password to another individual or uses another individual's account. • Illegally downloads copyrighted materials from the internet. • Visits sites on the internet which contain sexually explicit material. • Harms or destroys data of another student or	• Discuss incident with student. • Hold a disciplinary meeting with parents/guardians, student, and staff members. • Suspend student from school privileges. • Suspend from school if above interventions are not effective. In addition to above measures students will be required to pay full restitution for acts of deliberate damage or graffiti. Costs for damage to school district property will include labor, materials, consulting fees and other costs associated with replacing or restoring the damaged

person, the internet, or other networks. • Creates, downloads, or uploads computer viruses; or Violates any rule outlined in the Acceptable Use Policy.	property.
Prohibition of Tobacco Products and Paraphernalia A student may not possess or use any tobacco product, vape pens, cigarette lighters, matches, rolling papers, pipes, or other such paraphernalia.	• Discuss incident with student. • Hold a disciplinary meeting with parents/guardians, student, and staff members. • Suspend student from school privileges. • Suspend from school if above interventions are not effective.
Prohibition of Drugs or Alcohol for Personal Use	• Hold a disciplinary meeting with parents/guardians, student, and staff members. • Refer to Student Assistance Team. • Suspend student from school privileges. • Suspend from school if above interventions are not effective. • Follow up with the SAP team to get invention measures in place.
Prohibition of Bullying and Cyberbullying and Serious Threats Bullying of a pupil, whether by other students, staff, visitors, parents, guests, contractors, or volunteers, is prohibited. All students are protected under this policy, and bullying is prohibited without regard to its subject matter or motivating animus. Bullying is defined as any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one or more Students either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following: 1. Substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more students 2. Adversely affecting the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the Destinations Career Academy of Georgia 's educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress. 3. Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a pupil's physical or mental health; or 4. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school. 5. Assuming a false identity online to deceive others. 6. Spreading lies and/or rumors about	• **First Offense or Minor Infraction:** A disciplinary meeting with parents/guardians, student, and staff members will be held to discuss the incident. A record of the infraction will be placed in the student's file. • **Second Offense or Minor Infraction:** The student will be suspended from school privileges. A record of the infraction will be placed in the student's file. • **Third Offense or Severe Infraction:** Repeated infractions or severe infractions will result in dismissal from GADCA's program. If it is determined by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel, tribunal of school officials that a student in grades 6 through 12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall also be assigned to an alternative school in the student's residential area. Determination of the severity of an infraction is at the discretion of the Destinations Career Academy of Georgia's Administration. **To learn more about cyberbullying, visit the following websites:** https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it/index.html http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/cyberbullying.html http://cyberbullying.org/ • https://www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org/experiencing- bullying/cyber-bullying/

victims. 7. Deceiving people into revealing personal information. 8. Sending or forwarding mean or malicious text messages. 9. Posting pictures of victims without their consent. Effects of Cyberbullying include, but are not limited to: 1. Physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student. 2. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical, emotional, or mental harm. 3. Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property. 4. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's education opportunities. **In accordance with OCGA § 20-2-751.4 The following Investigation procedures will be followed:** **1. Reporting:** Teachers or school employees with reliable information indicating someone is a target of bullying must promptly report it to the school principal or head of school. Additionally, a procedure will be implemented to allowing anyone, including teachers, students, parents, or guardians, to report bullying anonymously or in their name, providing essential information on bullying activity. **2. Investigation Procedure:** Investigations by the administration to determine if bullying has occurred will occur in a timely manner – within 24 hours of the report. **3. Anti-Retaliation Policy:** GADCA will enforce a strict policy prohibiting retaliation following a report of bullying and ensure provisions are consistent with statutory requirements. **4. Counseling and Supports** : will be 8. deployed by the school guidance counselor and other	

agencies deemed	
Students shall not harass members of the school community. Sexual Harassment is defined by, but not limited to, demanding sexual favors, threatens, intimidates, or creates a hostile environment because of someone's gender, age, race, color, sexual orientation (known or perceived), national origin, religion, disability, socioeconomic status and/or political beliefs.	**Student Consequences** • **First Offense or Minor Infraction:** A disciplinary meeting with parents/guardians, student, and staff members will be held to discuss the incident. A record of the infraction will be placed in the student's file. • **Second Offense or Minor Infraction:** The student will be suspended from school privileges. A record of the infraction will be placed in the student's file. • **Third Offense or Severe Infraction:** Repeated infractions or severe infractions may result in the student being assigned to an alternative school. Determination of the severity of an infraction is at the discretion of the Destinations Career Academy of Georgia's Administration. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.7(a) - *The Professional Standards Commission shall establish a state mandated process for students to follow in reporting instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student which shall not prohibit the ability of a student to report the incident to law enforcement authorities. Each local school system shall be required to implement and follow such state mandated process and shall include the mandated process in student handbooks and in employee handbooks or policies.* • Student Reporting of Alleged Sexually Inappropriate Behavior **(a)** Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school. **(b)** Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Head of School or the Academic Administrator. **(c)** Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19- 7-5 shall make an

	oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as
Prohibition of Possession of a Weapon Destinations Career Academy of Georgia has a zero- tolerance policy on weapons violations. Students shall not possess any weapon as defined in this code's glossary. A student violates this rule even if he/she did not intend to use such thing as a weapon.	• Students in possession of a weapon will go to an expulsion hearing.

Search and Seizure Policy - To maintain order and discipline at school functions and protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student's backpack or student automobile in certain circumstances and may seize any illegal or unauthorized materials discovered during the search.

Expulsion: The indefinite exclusion of a student, age 14 or over, from school enrollment for disciplinary purposes.

A student may be long-term suspended from the school if, in the opinion of the school administration, there has been sufficient violation of the rules of conduct as established by the School so that continued attendance would be disruptive or dangerous to other students and/or staff. Long-term suspension shall occur if a student continually violates the GDS Honor Code, or if a student or his/her parent(s) fail to adhere to the terms of the GDS Honor Code and other GDS policies. School administration has the discretion to enforce the honor code with all due consideration given to the age of the student and other relevant circumstances.

GDS and its employees shall follow applicable rules concerning the discipline of students who qualify under relevant special education laws.

The school administration may recommend Expulsion, and/or participation in a Behavioral Contract. Decisions Expulsion shall be made by the school administration after appropriate notice to the parties involved and a hearing if one is requested.
GDS's disciplinary procedures will be exercised in a manner consistent with state and federal law, including the Gun-Free Schools Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Weapons Prohibition Policy

To ensure a safe and secure learning environment, Georgia Digital School (GDS) strictly prohibits students from possessing, displaying, handling, or threatening the use of any weapon or replica of a weapon during live virtual instructional sessions or while participating in any school-sponsored

activity, including but not limited to state testing, field trips, regional events, student activities, meetings, or other GDS-sponsored programs, whether on or off school property.

Weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, knives, explosives, metal knuckles, razors, ammunition, or any object that could reasonably be used to threaten or cause bodily harm. This prohibition applies even if the weapon is displayed from a student's home or visible on camera during live instruction.

Any student who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion, or administrative withdrawal, in accordance with the Georgia Student Discipline Code, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.1, and applicable State Board of Education rules. Incidents involving weapons will be reported to law enforcement and other appropriate authorities as required by Georgia law.

Students are expected to maintain a safe, distraction-free environment during all live instructional sessions. If a weapon becomes visible during a live class, the teacher or administrator may immediately remove the student from the session pending investigation.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICIES

Equal Education Opportunities

GDS provides equal education opportunities for all students and does not discriminate based on race, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected classification. GDS adheres to the legal obligations and requirements under all state and federal laws, including without limitation, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments of 1997, including identification, evaluation, and provision of an appropriate education.

Nondiscrimination and Harassment Policy

Georgia Digital School (GDS) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, and retaliation. GDS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or any other characteristic protected by federal or Georgia law.

Harassment includes unwelcome verbal, written, physical, or electronic conduct that interferes with a student's education or creates a hostile learning environment. Examples include threats, intimidation, bullying, slurs, offensive comments, inappropriate images, or unwanted sexual conduct.

Violations of this policy will be investigated promptly and addressed in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4 (Bullying), and applicable Georgia State Board of Education rules.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Georgia Digital School (GDS) prohibits sexual harassment in any form. No student, employee, volunteer, or visitor may engage in conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with a student's ability to learn or an employee's ability to work or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, inappropriate comments, gestures, physical contact, or the sharing or display of sexually explicit or suggestive material, whether in person or through electronic communication.

Relationships of a romantic or sexual nature between school employees and students are strictly prohibited. Employees are required to report suspected violations in accordance with school policy and Georgia law.

Reports of sexual harassment will be investigated promptly and addressed in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.6, and applicable Georgia State Board of Education policies. Appropriate corrective or disciplinary action will be taken when warranted.

Restorative Practices

Whenever appropriate, Georgia Digital School may incorporate restorative practices designed to:

- Repair harm.
- Strengthen relationships.
- Teach appropriate behavior.
- Improve decision-making.
- Prevent repeated misconduct.

Restorative practices may accompany disciplinary consequences but do not replace disciplinary authority when more serious action is warranted.

Student Due Process

Students subject to disciplinary action will be afforded due process consistent with:

- Georgia law
- Georgia State Board of Education Rules
- Thomasville City Schools policies

Students and parents will receive notice of alleged misconduct and an opportunity to respond before disciplinary consequences are imposed, except when immediate action is necessary to protect the safety of students or staff.

Student Responsibilities During Investigations

Students are expected to:

- Cooperate with school investigations.
- Provide truthful information.
- Comply with administrative directives.
- Preserve evidence when requested.

Providing false information during a school investigation may result in additional disciplinary action.

Relationship to Other Policies

This Code of Conduct works in conjunction with:

- Section 3 – Academic Integrity
- Section 4 – Attendance
- Section 6 – Technology Use Policy
- Section 8 – Safety, Bullying, and Harassment
- Section 9 – Student Records and Privacy

Where more specific requirements exist within those sections, the more specific policy shall govern.

SECTION 6 - Technology Use Policy

Purpose

Georgia Digital School (GDS) integrates technology into teaching and learning to provide students with equitable access to high-quality virtual instruction. Access to school technology, software, networks, and online resources is a privilege provided to support educational purposes.

Students are expected to use all school-issued devices, software, accounts, and internet resources responsibly, ethically, safely, and in accordance with this handbook, Georgia law, Thomasville City Schools policies, and applicable federal law.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, loss of technology privileges, restitution for damages, and, when appropriate, referral to law enforcement.

School-Issued Technology

Students may be issued technology and instructional resources necessary to participate in the virtual instructional program.

School-issued technology remains the property of Georgia Digital School or its educational partners.

Students and parents are responsible for:

- Protecting issued equipment from damage.
- Maintaining equipment in good working condition.
- Reporting lost, stolen, or damaged equipment immediately.
- Returning all school-issued equipment upon withdrawal or at the end of enrollment.
- Using equipment only for authorized educational purposes.

Intentional damage, misuse, or failure to return school property may result in financial responsibility consistent with applicable law and school policy.

Acceptable Use

Students shall use school technology in a manner that supports learning, demonstrates digital citizenship, and respects the rights of others.

Acceptable uses include:

- Participating in live instruction.
- Completing assignments.
- Accessing instructional resources.
- Communicating appropriately with teachers and classmates.
- Conducting academic research.
- Participating in approved educational activities.

Technology shall not be used in any manner that interferes with instruction, violates law, or compromises the security of school systems.

User Accounts and Password Security

Each student is assigned individual accounts to access school technology systems.

Students are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of usernames and passwords.

Students shall not:

- Share passwords.
- Use another student's account.
- Attempt to access another user's information.

- Circumvent security measures.
- Allow another individual to complete work under their account.

Students are responsible for all activity conducted through their assigned accounts.

Internet Safety

Georgia Digital School supports safe and responsible internet use in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

Students are expected to:

- Access only educationally appropriate websites.
- Respect copyright laws.
- Protect personal information.
- Report suspicious online activity.
- Demonstrate responsible digital citizenship.

Parents and Learning Coaches are encouraged to monitor student internet use outside of instructional activities.

Personal Information

Students shall not publicly share personal information, including:

- Home address
- Telephone number
- Personal email address
- Passwords
- Financial information
- Personally identifiable information of other students or staff

Students should immediately report requests for personal information that appear suspicious or inappropriate.

Digital Citizenship

Students are expected to demonstrate respectful and responsible behavior in all digital learning environments.

Students shall:

- Communicate respectfully.
- Use appropriate language.
- Respect intellectual property.
- Demonstrate academic honesty.
- Report cyberbullying or inappropriate online behavior.
- Follow teacher expectations during virtual instruction.

Digital behavior is subject to the same expectations as conduct occurring in a physical classroom.

Social Media

Georgia Digital School recognizes that many students participate in social media outside of school. Students should understand that online conduct may become subject to school discipline when it:

- Materially disrupts school operations.
- Threatens the safety of students or staff.

- Constitutes bullying or harassment.
- Violates applicable law.
- Interferes with another student's educational opportunities.

Students shall not:

- Represent unofficial social media accounts as official Georgia Digital School accounts.
- Use school email accounts to establish personal social media accounts.
- Impersonate school personnel or other students.
- Use social media to harass, threaten, intimidate, or bully others.

Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies

The use of artificial intelligence technologies must comply with the Academic Integrity Policy contained in Section 3.

Technology that generates written work, images, code, or other academic products may only be used when authorized by the classroom teacher.

Unauthorized use of AI tools may constitute academic dishonesty.

Acceptable Use Guidelines for the Internet

- Posting anonymous messages online is not permitted unless authorized by the course's online teacher. Impersonating another person is also strictly prohibited.
- Students must only use their own usernames/passwords and must not share these with anyone.
- Students may not interfere with other user's ability to access GDS or disclose anyone's password to others or allow them to use another user's account. Students are responsible for all activity that are associated with their usernames and passwords.
- Students are expected to maintain their login and password for all platforms and devices.
- Students must not publicly post their personal contact information (address and phone number) or anyone else's.
- Students must not publicly post any messages that were sent to them privately.
- Students are not allowed to download, transmit, or post material intended for personal gain or profit, non-GDS commercial activities, non-GDS product advertising, or political lobbying on a GDS owned instructional computing resource.
- Students may not use GDS instructional computing resources to sell or purchase any illegal items or substances.
- Students are not allowed to upload or post any software on GDS instructional computing resources that are not specifically required and approved for student assignments.
- Students must have their own student login and use it when completing work.
- GDS does not promote any social media that is not created, maintained, and monitored by faculty and staff at GDS. Therefore, the use of any platform such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Discord, etc. is outside of the scope of GDS.
- Students should not create any social media profiles using their GDS email address.
- GDS and its staff are not responsible for any individual or group communications on any non-approved school platforms.

Prohibited Technology Use
Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:

- Unauthorized access to school systems.
- Sharing passwords.
- Downloading unauthorized software.
- Installing malware or viruses.
- Circumventing internet filters or security controls.
- Viewing or distributing obscene or illegal material.
- Using school technology for commercial purposes.
- Accessing another user's files without authorization.
- Harassing or threatening others electronically.
- Recording or distributing classroom sessions without authorization.
- Violating copyright or intellectual property laws.
- Attempting to disrupt school operations through technology.

Electronic Communications
School-issued email accounts and communication platforms shall be used for educational purposes.
Students should communicate respectfully with teachers, staff, and classmates.
Electronic communications using school systems are not private and may be monitored, retained, or disclosed in accordance with applicable law.

Privacy Expectations
Users should have no expectation of privacy regarding information stored on or transmitted through school-owned devices, school networks, or school accounts.
Georgia Digital School reserves the right to monitor, inspect, access, retrieve, or review information stored on school-owned technology or transmitted through school systems to the extent permitted by law.
Monitoring may occur to:

- Protect student safety.
- Maintain system security.
- Investigate suspected misconduct.
- Ensure compliance with school policies.
- Protect school property.

Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with applicable federal and state law, including FERPA.

Technology Support
Students experiencing technical difficulties should contact the Georgia Digital School Technology Support Team as soon as possible.
Technology problems do not automatically excuse missed assignments or attendance requirements.
Students and families should communicate promptly with teachers whenever technical issues interfere with participation.

Consequences for Misuse
Violations of this Technology Use Policy may result in one or more of the following:

- Warning or corrective instruction.

- Parent notification.
- Temporary restriction of technology privileges.
- Restitution for damaged equipment.
- School disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct.
- Suspension or expulsion when authorized by law.
- Referral to law enforcement when criminal activity is suspected.

The disciplinary response will depend upon the nature and severity of the violation.

Relationship to Other Policies

This Technology Use Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Section 3 – Academic Integrity
- Section 5 – Student Conduct and Discipline
- Section 8 – Safety, Bullying, and Harassment
- Section 9 – Student Records and Privacy

Where a more specific policy applies, that policy shall govern.

SECTION 7 - Student Services and Specialized Programs

Our Commitment to Every Student

Georgia Digital School (GDS) is committed to ensuring every student has equitable access to a high-quality public education. The school provides a comprehensive system of academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and specialized support services designed to meet the diverse needs of all learners.
Services are provided in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, Georgia State Board of Education Rules, and Thomasville City Schools policies.

Student Support Services

Georgia Digital School provides a continuum of student support services that may include:

- Academic intervention
- School counseling
- College and career planning
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- Special Education
- Section 504 Services
- English Learner (EL) Services
- Gifted Education
- Career and Technical Education (CTAE)
- School health support
- Community resource referrals

Services are individualized based upon student need and eligibility requirements.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Georgia Digital School utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to provide timely academic and behavioral interventions for students demonstrating additional needs.
MTSS is a data-driven framework that supports early identification of student needs through:

- Universal screening
- Progress monitoring
- Targeted interventions
- Individualized support
- Ongoing review of student progress

Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in MTSS planning whenever appropriate.

School Counseling Services

School counselors provide services that support students' academic, career, and personal development.
Counseling services may include:

- Academic planning
- Graduation planning
- Postsecondary planning
- Social-emotional support
- Individual student conferences
- Small-group counseling

- Crisis response
- Referrals to community agencies when appropriate

School counseling services are preventative and developmental in nature and are not intended to replace outside mental health treatment.

Special Education Services

Georgia Digital School provides special education and related services to eligible students with disabilities in accordance with:

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Georgia Department of Education regulations

Eligible students receive services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed by the student's IEP Team.

Parents are valued members of the IEP Team and are encouraged to participate in all meetings regarding their child's educational program.

Child Find

Georgia Digital School participates in the Child Find process required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Child Find requires public schools to identify, locate, and evaluate children who may have disabilities and who may require special education services.

Parents who suspect their child may have a disability are encouraged to contact the Special Programs Department for additional information regarding referral procedures.

Section 504 Services

Students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities may qualify for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Eligible students receive accommodations through an individualized Section 504 Plan designed to provide equal access to educational opportunities.

Parents who believe their child may qualify for Section 504 services should contact the school for additional information.

English Learner (EL) Services

Georgia Digital School provides instructional support for students identified as English Learners (ELs) in accordance with federal and state requirements.

Services are designed to assist students in developing English language proficiency while accessing grade-level academic content.

Parents of English Learners receive information regarding:

- Language screening
- Placement decisions
- Instructional services
- Progress monitoring
- Annual English language proficiency assessments

Gifted Education
Georgia Digital School provides gifted education services for students who qualify under Georgia Department of Education eligibility criteria.
Gifted services are designed to provide appropriately differentiated instruction that challenges students to maximize their academic potential.
Eligibility and services are determined in accordance with Georgia Board of Education Rules.

Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE)
Georgia Digital School offers Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education opportunities that prepare students for college, careers, military service, and workforce success.
Programs emphasize:

- Career exploration
- Industry-relevant skills
- Career pathways
- Employability skills
- Postsecondary readiness

Course offerings may vary based upon enrollment and staffing.

Students Experiencing Homelessness
Georgia Digital School complies with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
Students experiencing homelessness have the right to:

- Immediate enrollment.
- Educational stability.
- Access to transportation services when applicable.
- Participation in educational programs.
- Access to free school meals, when eligible.
- Assistance removing barriers to enrollment and participation.

Families experiencing homelessness should contact the school's McKinney-Vento Liaison for assistance.

Foster Care
Georgia Digital School supports students placed in foster care in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and applicable Georgia law.
The school collaborates with child welfare agencies and district personnel to support educational stability and continuity of services.
Students in foster care may receive assistance with:

- Enrollment
- Records transfer
- Educational planning
- School stability
- Coordination of services

Military-Connected Students

Georgia Digital School recognizes the unique educational needs of students from military-connected families.
Consistent with the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and Georgia law, the school supports military families through:

- Timely enrollment
- Educational records transfer
- Flexible placement when appropriate
- Graduation support
- Transition assistance

The school values the service and sacrifice of military families and strives to minimize educational disruptions associated with military transitions.

Migrant Education

Georgia Digital School is committed to supporting migrant students and their families by fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive learning environment.
Consistent with Title I, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), eligible migrant students may receive services including:

- Immediate enrollment when permitted by law.
- Assistance with educational records.
- Supplemental academic support.
- Coordination of community resources.
- Educational continuity during school transitions.

Eligibility for migrant services is determined in accordance with federal and state guidelines.

Student Health and Wellness

Georgia Digital School recognizes that healthy students are better prepared for learning.
The school promotes student wellness by encouraging:

- Healthy habits
- Positive mental health
- School connectedness
- Safe learning environments
- Access to available community resources

Parents remain responsible for routine medical care and should notify the school of any health condition that may affect student participation.

Crisis Response and Student Safety

When a student demonstrates behaviors indicating possible risk of harm to themselves or others, Georgia Digital School may implement appropriate safety procedures consistent with state law, district policy, and established crisis response protocols.
The school may collaborate with:

- Parents or guardians
- Emergency responders
- Mental health professionals
- Child protective agencies

- Other appropriate agencies when necessary to protect student safety

Nondiscrimination in Student Services
Georgia Digital School provides all student services without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, or any other protected status recognized under applicable federal or state law.
Questions regarding student services or accommodations should be directed to the appropriate school administrator or Special Programs Department.

Who to Contact
If you need assistance, Georgia Digital School staff are available to support you. The chart below identifies the appropriate department or staff member for common questions and student support needs.

If You Need Help With…	**Contact**
Academic concerns or classroom performance	Classroom Teacher
Assignments, grades, or missing work	Classroom Teacher
Attendance questions	Classroom Teacher or Registrar
Student schedule changes	MS/HS School Counselor
Graduation requirements	HS School Counselor
College and Career Planning	HS School Counselor
Social-emotional concerns	HS School Counselor
Crisis or student safety concerns	School Counselor or Principal
Special Education (IEP) Services	Special Programs Academic Administrator or Case Manager
Child Find referrals	Special Programs Academic Administrator
Section 504 Accommodations	Section 504 Coordinator
English Learner (EL) Services	EL Coordinator
Gifted Education	Principal or Gifted Program Coordinator
MTSS or Academic Intervention	MTSS Coordinator or Principal
School Counseling Services	MS/HS School Counselor
Student Health Concerns	School Counselor
McKinney-Vento (Homeless Services)	McKinney-Vento Liaison
Foster Care Services	Foster Care Liaison
Military-Connected Student Support	School Counselor or Military Liaison
Migrant Education Services	Migrant Education Liaison
Technology Support	Technology Help Desk
School-issued Devices	Technology Help Desk

If You Need Help With…	Contact
Canvas or Learning Platform Issues	Technology Help Desk
Student Records or Transcripts	Registrar
Enrollment or Withdrawal	Registrar
Residency Documentation	Registrar
General School Operations	Operations Manager
School Policies	Principal
Formal Complaints or Grievances	Executive Director

Key School Contacts

Position	Role
Executive Director Dr. Nakia McCall	Overall school leadership, formal grievances, unresolved concerns
Principal Brandi Beavers	Student discipline, instructional leadership, parent concerns
Operations Manager Kris Rosenquist	School operations, logistics, compliance support
School Counselor MS – Angelica Cuttle HS – Yulissa Balsamo	Academic planning, graduation, college and career readiness, social-emotional support
Operations Manager Kris Rosenquist	Enrollment, withdrawals, records, transcripts, attendance records
Special Programs Academic Administrator Dr. Jasmine Sadler	Special Education, Child Find, Section 504 oversight, specialized student services
EL Coordinator Dr. Jasmine Sadler	English Learner services and language support
Technology Help Desk	School-issued devices, passwords, Canvas, technical assistance
McKinney-Vento Liaison Crystal Crawford	Homeless education services
Foster Care Liaison Crystal Crawford	Educational stability for students in foster care
Military Liaison Crystal Crawford	Military-connected student support
Migrant Education Liaison Crystal Crawford	Migrant student services

When to Start with the Teacher

For most academic questions, concerns, or classroom issues, families should begin by contacting the classroom teacher. Teachers are often able to resolve concerns quickly and may involve additional school personnel when specialized support is needed.

If additional assistance is required, families should follow the Chain of Communication outlined in Section 2 of this handbook.

SECTION 8

School Safety, Student Rights, and Nondiscrimination

Commitment to a Safe Learning Environment

Georgia Digital School (GDS) is committed to maintaining a safe, orderly, respectful, and inclusive learning environment where every student has the opportunity to learn free from intimidation, discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence, or disruption.

Student safety is a shared responsibility among students, parents, guardians, Learning Coaches, teachers, administrators, and community partners.

The school promotes a culture of respect, responsibility, accountability, and positive relationships while complying with all applicable federal and state laws governing student safety.

Equal Educational Opportunity

Georgia Digital School provides equal educational opportunities to all students without discrimination based on:

- Race
- Color
- National origin
- Sex
- Disability
- Religion
- Age
- Military status
- Any other protected classification recognized by federal or Georgia law

The school complies with, but is not limited to:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Applicable Georgia laws and State Board of Education Rules

No student shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity operated by Georgia Digital School.

Nondiscrimination

Georgia Digital School prohibits unlawful discrimination in all educational programs, services, activities, admissions, and employment practices.

Complaints alleging discrimination will be investigated promptly and fairly in accordance with applicable law and school procedures.

Retaliation against any individual for reporting discrimination or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Child Find

Child Find Child Find is a process based on the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Part C. The purpose is to identify, locate and evaluate individuals with disabilities who may need special education services. Anyone can initiate the process: a parent, doctor, teacher, relative or friend.

To ensure that all GDS students are properly identified and served, the parent or guardian will be asked at least twice if their student has ever been evaluated for possible special education services, and if the student has ever received special education services as a student in a public or private school. If so, the parent or guardian will be asked if their student has an active Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Multilingual Learners

Multilingual Learners who transfer in from other schools and are already identified as ML students will qualify for ML services at GDS. ML students who are new to the area will be identified through Home Language Surveys. These surveys are a part of the student registration packet. All students will be required to return a completed Home Language Survey before starting class. Those who list a language other than English on their Home Language Survey will be required to take the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT).

Once a student has qualified for ML services, the school LEP team will meet to discuss which services the student would benefit from. The services that will be discussed at the meeting are the:

- Amount and level of in-class and out-of-class tutoring per week by ML instructors;
- Amount and level of accommodations and/or modifications for class work and testing; and
- Amount/type of assistive technology devices (such as native language dictionaries, etc.) the

student will use, if any. Based on the LEP team's recommendation, the ESL instructor will either work in-class with the student or out-of-class in small groups or one-on-one.

Vocabulary and content will be generated by the instructor. The instructor will ensure that students understand the key vocabulary being presented in each unit as well as incidental vocabulary necessary for understanding. In addition, the ESL instructor will teach English grammar patterns that are unfamiliar to the student. The ESL instructor will also be available to help with content testing during the year and during EOG based on accommodations that were determined by the LEP team.

All ML students will be tested annually during the W-APT window, typically February through mid-March. Students who receive an overall composite score of 4.7 or below on the W-APT would qualify to continue receiving ESL services. Those who test out would continue to receive ESL services only if the team deems it necessary and funding is available. Students who have become proficient in English but are struggling academically would qualify for other services offered by GDS, such as weekly teacher tutoring, at-risk tutoring services, and the MTSS process. ESL instructor(s) will monitor all ML students' achievement by keeping daily records of lessons taught and the students' accomplishments. Evaluations will take place during regular meetings between the ESL instructor and the classroom teacher.

Special Programs

At GDS, we are committed to building an inclusive and supportive environment where all students can thrive. We recognize the vital role that special programs play in addressing the unique needs of our students. By adhering to Federal and Georgia state laws, we ensure equal opportunities for every student to achieve academic success and excel in their educational journey.

Our programs and services are thoughtfully designed to address the academic and developmental needs of eligible students. GDS collaborates with district departments, school sites, specialized programs, and external community organizations to provide robust support and resources, empowering students to reach their full potential.

Programs provided through this office are:

- Students Experiencing Homelessness (McKinney-Vento Act)
- Foster Care
- Military Affiliated Students
- Migrant Education

Students Experiencing Homelessness (McKinney-Vento Act)

The term *"homeless children and youths"* refers to individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes students living in transitional or emergency shelters, motels, campgrounds, or sharing housing with other families due to a loss of housing or financial hardship. It also applies to students staying in substandard housing, abandoned in hospitals, or living in places not typically used for sleeping. Additionally, this definition encompasses students who have run away from home or those whose parents have forced them out of the home. Homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin throughout the school year, if feasible, even if they move outside the school's boundaries. Alternatively, they may enroll in the school district where they are currently residing. A student may also qualify as an *"unaccompanied youth"* if they are temporarily living with someone other than their parent or legal guardian, are moving frequently, staying in a shelter, or are otherwise not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

At GDS, we are committed to providing a stable educational environment and comprehensive support to students who qualify under the McKinney-Vento Act.

GDS's Commitments to Homeless Students and Families:

- Ensure equitable access to education.
- Connect families with essential resources and services.
- Build partnerships with community outreach organizations.
- Provide training and information to all stakeholders to promote awareness and understanding.

MKV Federal and Georgia Laws

- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: This federal law ensures that homeless students have equal access to education and the opportunity to succeed academically

If you are experiencing homelessness, please contact the Homeless Student Liaison, Ms. Crawford. Eligibility determinations of qualifying students are made on a case-by-case basis.

Foster Care

At GDS, we are dedicated to promoting and implementing protocols that support the educational stability and success of students in foster care and those awaiting placement. By removing barriers and fostering collaborative efforts, GDS creates a supportive learning environment designed to ensure academic achievement and personal growth.

Who Are Students in Foster Care?

Students in foster care are children or youth placed under the legal custody or care of a state child welfare agency or a court-appointed guardian due to circumstances such as abuse, neglect, or other factors requiring out-of-home placement.

GDS's Support for Students in Foster Care:

- Assistance with enrollment, even in the absence of typical documentation, such as school records or immunization records.
- Commitment to maintaining school stability, regardless of changes in placement.
- Collaboration with child welfare agencies to address educational needs and facilitate smooth transitions between schools.
- Access to essential educational resources, including tutoring, counseling, and extracurricular activities.

Additionally, GDS ensures that students in foster care are marked present when attending court proceedings related to their care and placement.

Foster Care Federal and Georgia Laws

- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): ESSA includes provisions to ensure educational stability and support for students in foster care.

Military Affiliated Students

GDS honors the sacrifices made by military families and is committed to supporting military-affiliated students. The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (MIC3) addresses key educational transition challenges faced by children of military families, ensuring they receive the support needed for a seamless academic experience.

Who Qualifies as Military-Affiliated Students?

Eligible military-affiliated students include children whose guardians are:

- Active-duty members of the uniformed services, including National Guard and Reserve members on active-duty orders.
- Members or veterans who have been medically discharged or retired within the past year.
- Members who died while on active duty (eligibility extends for one year after death).

- Uniformed members of the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) or the United States Public Health Service (USPHS).

Military-Connected Students

Georgia Digital School (GDS) proudly supports military-connected students and families. As a statewide public school program operated in partnership with Thomasville City Schools, GDS complies with the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and applicable federal and Georgia laws designed to reduce educational barriers associated with military relocation.

Enrollment and Records

To support timely enrollment and educational continuity, GDS will:

- Enroll eligible military-connected students as quickly as possible.
- Accept unofficial or hand-carried educational records for immediate enrollment while awaiting official records.
- Request official records from the sending school and appropriately place students based on available documentation until records are received.
- Provide flexibility during enrollment and school transitions to minimize disruptions caused by military moves.

Immunization Requirements

Military-connected students transferring to GDS will be allowed 30 calendar days from the date of enrollment to provide required immunization documentation or begin any required immunization series, consistent with Georgia law and the Interstate Compact.

Course Placement and Student Support

GDS will make every reasonable effort to ensure students experience a smooth academic transition by:

- Honoring course placements, special program placements, and educational services from the student's previous school when appropriate.
- Conducting additional evaluations or assessments when necessary to ensure proper placement and continued academic success.
- Providing access to school counselors, special education staff, English Learner services, and other student support personnel.
- Collaborating with military family support organizations and School Liaison Program (SLP) representatives, when appropriate, to assist military-connected students and their families.

Graduation Requirements

For students transferring during high school, GDS will make every reasonable effort to facilitate on-time graduation by:

- Accepting equivalent coursework completed at the sending school whenever possible.
- Waiving specific graduation requirements when permitted by Georgia law and local policy if comparable coursework has been successfully completed.
- Providing alternative pathways or opportunities for students to satisfy graduation requirements when a waiver is not appropriate.
- Working collaboratively with the sending school, receiving school, and family to support timely graduation whenever possible.

Applicable Laws and Regulations

GDS supports military-connected students in accordance with:

- Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (O.C.G.A. § 20-17-1 et seq.)
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which recognizes military-connected students as a special population for educational support.
- Applicable guidance issued by the Georgia Department of Education and the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3).

Migrant Students

Support for Migratory Children and Youth

Georgia Digital School (GDS) is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all students, including migratory children and youth. In accordance with federal and Georgia law, GDS works to ensure that eligible migratory students have equitable access to educational opportunities and the services needed to support academic success.

Who Is Eligible?

Under **Title I, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**, a migratory child is a student whose parent, guardian, spouse, or the student (if independent) has moved within the preceding **36 months** across school district or state boundaries to obtain or seek temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work and who meets the eligibility requirements established by the Migrant Education Program (MEP).

Services for Eligible Migratory Students

Eligible migratory students may receive assistance designed to reduce educational disruptions caused by frequent moves. Services may include:

- Prompt enrollment and assistance with school registration, even when records are temporarily unavailable, as permitted by law.
- Assistance in obtaining and transferring educational records to support continuity of instruction.
- Academic support services designed to address learning gaps resulting from interrupted schooling.
- Referrals to available educational, health, nutrition, and community resources.
- Language assistance and communication support for students and families, when appropriate.
- Coordination with the Georgia Migrant Education Program (MEP) and other agencies to ensure eligible students receive available services.

Identification and Referral

Families who believe they may qualify for services through the **Georgia Migrant Education Program (MEP)** are encouraged to notify GDS during enrollment or contact the school at any time. School staff will assist families with the identification and referral process to determine eligibility for available services.

Applicable Laws

GDS provides services to eligible migratory students in accordance with:

- *Title I, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*
- *Georgia Department of Education Migrant Education Program (MEP) requirements*

Bullying Glossary of Terms

Definitions

For purposes of this Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, the following definitions apply.

Bullying

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, bullying means an act that includes one or more of the following:

- A willful attempt or threat to inflict injury upon another person when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so;
- An intentional display of force that would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
- An intentional written, verbal, physical, or electronic act that a reasonable person would perceive as intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate another person and that:
    - Causes substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm;
    - Substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or school performance;
    - Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
    - Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying is prohibited on school property, at school-sponsored activities, on school transportation, at designated school bus stops, and through electronic communications when the conduct substantially disrupts the educational environment or interferes with the rights and safety of students or school personnel.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying committed through the use of electronic communication or technology, including but not limited to:

- Email
- Text messages
- Instant messaging
- Social media platforms
- Blogs
- Online discussion boards
- Websites
- Digital images or videos
- Online gaming platforms
- Any other electronic communication device or service

Cyberbullying is subject to school discipline when it substantially disrupts the educational environment or otherwise falls within the authority granted to schools under Georgia law.

Harassment

Harassment is unwelcome verbal, written, visual, physical, or electronic conduct directed toward another individual that is based on a protected characteristic and is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to:

- Create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- Interfere with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from school programs or activities; or
- Disrupt the orderly operation of the school.

Harassment prohibited by this handbook includes conduct prohibited under applicable federal and state laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other applicable laws.

Disability

A disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment, as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as applicable.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written educational plan developed in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that identifies a student's present levels of performance, annual goals, specially designed instruction, related services, accommodations, modifications, and supports necessary to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Manifestation Determination Review (MDR)

A Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) is a meeting required under IDEA when a disciplinary removal constitutes a change in placement for a student with a disability. The student's IEP Team determines whether the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability or resulted from the school's failure to implement the student's IEP.

Possession

Possession means having physical custody of or exercising control over an item, whether on the student's person or within the student's belongings, including but not limited to backpacks, purses, clothing, lockers, vehicles, electronic devices, or other personal property.

Short-Term Suspension

A short-term suspension is the involuntary removal of a student from school or school activities for ten (10) school days or fewer, in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.

Long-Term Suspension

A long-term suspension is the involuntary removal of a student from school for more than ten (10) school days, following the due process procedures required under Georgia law.

Expulsion

An expulsion is the removal of a student from a Georgia public school beyond the period of a long-term suspension following a disciplinary hearing conducted in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751 and applicable State Board of Education rules.

Dangerous Weapon

A dangerous weapon has the meaning provided in O.C.G.A. §§ 16-11-121 and 20-2-751 and includes any firearm, explosive, knife meeting the statutory definition, or other instrument capable of causing death or serious bodily injury.

Firearm

A firearm has the meaning established by O.C.G.A. § 16-11-127.1 and applicable federal law, including the Gun-Free Schools Act (20 U.S.C. § 7961).

Hazardous Object

A hazardous object includes any item that, although not classified as a firearm or dangerous weapon, is capable of causing bodily injury or is used in a manner that threatens the health, safety, or welfare of others. Examples include, but are not limited to, razors, box cutters, stun guns, tasers, brass knuckles, air-powered weapons, laser devices used to endanger others, and similar objects prohibited by Georgia law or school policy.

Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination

Georgia Digital School (GDS) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment for all students and employees. Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, discrimination, threats, and retaliation are prohibited and will not be tolerated.

GDS complies with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, the Georgia Department of Education's Model Bullying Policy, and all applicable federal civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation **Act of 1973,** and the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).**

Bullying Prohibited

Georgia Digital School prohibits bullying in accordance with **O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4**. Bullying includes any written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that a reasonable person would consider intended to:

- Harm another student;
- Intimidate another student;
- Threaten another student;
- Humiliate another student;
- Substantially interfere with a student's educational opportunities;
- Disrupt the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying includes cyberbullying occurring through electronic communication when it substantially affects the school environment or interferes with a student's educational opportunities.

Bullying is prohibited:

- During virtual instruction;
- During school-sponsored activities;
- At testing locations;
- During field trips;
- Through school technology;
- Through electronic communication that materially impacts the school environment.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying includes the use of electronic communication to:

- Harass
- Threaten
- Humiliate
- Impersonate
- Spread rumors
- Share embarrassing images
- Encourage harassment
- Create false online identities

Georgia Digital School may investigate cyberbullying occurring off campus when the conduct materially disrupts school operations or interferes with another student's educational experience.

Harassment

Harassment of any student, employee, volunteer, or visitor is prohibited.

Harassment includes unwelcome conduct based upon a protected characteristic that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Examples include:

- Verbal harassment
- Physical harassment
- Written harassment
- Electronic harassment
- Visual harassment

Sexual Harassment

Georgia Digital School prohibits sexual harassment as defined by Title IX and applicable federal regulations.

Sexual harassment may include:

- Unwelcome sexual advances;
- Requests for sexual favors;
- Sexual comments or jokes;
- Unwelcome physical conduct;
- Sexual exploitation;
- Gender-based harassment;
- Sexual violence.

Reports involving potential Title IX violations will be investigated promptly in accordance with federal law and Thomasville City Schools procedures.

Reporting Safety Concerns

Students, parents, guardians, Learning Coaches, employees, and community members are encouraged to report concerns involving:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Threats
- Violence
- Weapons
- Self-harm concerns
- Suicide concerns
- Criminal activity
- Unsafe conditions

Reports should be made immediately to a teacher, counselor, Principal, Executive Director, or other appropriate school official.

Whenever immediate danger exists, individuals should contact local law enforcement by calling **911**.

Investigation Procedures

Upon receiving a report, Georgia Digital School will:

1. Review the reported concern.
2. Conduct an appropriate investigation.
3. Interview involved individuals when appropriate.
4. Review available evidence.

5. Take appropriate corrective action.
6. Notify parents or guardians when required by law or school policy.

The school will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality while fulfilling its legal obligation to investigate reports.

Protection from Retaliation

Retaliation against an individual who reports misconduct, participates in an investigation, or provides information during an investigation is prohibited.

Any act of retaliation may result in disciplinary action independent of the original complaint.

Weapons Prohibited

To promote a safe learning environment, students shall not possess, use, or threaten to use weapons during:

- School-sponsored activities;
- Required testing;
- Field trips;
- School events;
- Any school-controlled property.

Weapons include firearms, explosives, dangerous instruments, or other items prohibited by Georgia law.

Violations may result in:

- Immediate removal from the activity;
- Suspension;
- Recommendation for expulsion;
- Referral to law enforcement;
- Other disciplinary action authorized by Georgia law.

Threat Assessment and School Safety

Georgia Digital School takes all threats seriously.

Threatening statements or behaviors involving violence toward students, staff, or school operations will be evaluated promptly.

The school may:

- Conduct a threat assessment;
- Contact parents or guardians;
- Involve law enforcement;
- Implement safety plans;
- Restrict school participation when necessary.

Threat assessments will be conducted in accordance with applicable law and district procedures.

Mandatory Reporting

School employees are mandatory reporters under Georgia law.

Whenever school personnel have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused, neglected, exploited, or is otherwise at risk, a report will be made to the appropriate authorities as required by **O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5**.

Student Searches
When reasonable suspicion exists or when authorized by law, school officials may inspect school-issued technology, student belongings brought to school-sponsored activities, or other property under school control. Searches will be conducted in a manner consistent with applicable law and school policy.

Relationship to Other Policies
This section should be read together with:

- **Section 5 – Student Conduct and Discipline**
- **Section 6 – Technology Use Policy**
- **Section 7 – Student Services and Specialized Programs**
- **Section 9 – Student Records, Privacy, and Family Rights**

Where a more specific policy applies, that policy shall govern.

Who to Contact for Safety Concerns

Concern	**Primary Contact**
Bullying or Cyberbullying	Principal
Harassment or Discrimination	Principal or Executive Director
Title IX Concerns	Title IX Coordinator
Student Safety	Principal
Threats of Violence	Principal or Executive Director
Weapons	Principal or Law Enforcement (when appropriate)
Crisis or Mental Health Concern	School Counselor
Child Abuse or Neglect Concerns	School Counselor or Principal
General School Safety	Executive Director or Principal

SECTION 9
Student Records, Privacy, and Family Rights
Commitment to Student Privacy
Georgia Digital School (GDS) is committed to protecting the privacy, confidentiality, and security of student education records while ensuring parents and eligible students have access to the rights provided under federal and state law.
Student records are maintained in accordance with:

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Georgia student records laws
- Partner district policies

Student Educational Records
Georgia Digital School maintains educational records necessary to support student enrollment, instruction, and educational services.
Student records may include:

- Enrollment documents
- Attendance records
- Report cards
- Transcripts
- Assessment results
- Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Section 504 Plans
- Discipline records
- Health records required for enrollment
- Other educational records maintained by the school

Educational records are maintained in a secure manner consistent with applicable law.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
FERPA provides parents and eligible students certain rights regarding educational records. These rights include:
Right to Inspect and Review Records
Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review educational records maintained by the school within the timelines established by federal law.

Right to Request Amendment
Parents or eligible students may request correction of educational records believed to be inaccurate, misleading, or maintained in violation of privacy rights.
If the school declines to amend the record, parents or eligible students will be informed of their right to request a formal hearing in accordance with FERPA.

Right to Consent to Disclosure
Personally identifiable information from education records generally will not be disclosed without written parental consent except as authorized under FERPA.
Permitted disclosures may include:

- School officials with legitimate educational interests
- Receiving schools
- State educational agencies
- Audit or compliance reviews
- Health and safety emergencies
- Other disclosures specifically authorized by federal law

Directory Information
Georgia Digital School may designate certain student information as Directory Information consistent with FERPA and Thomasville City Schools policy.
Directory Information may include:

- Student name
- Grade level
- Participation in recognized school activities
- Honors and awards
- Dates of attendance

Parents have the right to opt out of the release of Directory Information in accordance with school procedures.

Parent Right-to-Know (ESSA)
In accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), parents have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teachers and paraprofessionals.
Upon request, the school will provide information regarding:

- Teacher certification
- Licensure status
- Subject area qualifications
- Whether services are being provided by paraprofessionals and their qualifications

Parents will also be notified when a student has been assigned to or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification requirements.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)
PPRA provides parents certain rights regarding surveys, instructional materials, and physical examinations.
Parents have the right to:

- Review instructional materials used in connection with surveys.
- Review certain surveys before administration.
- Opt their child out of participation in protected information surveys where permitted by law.
- Receive notice regarding certain physical examinations and screenings.

Georgia Digital School will provide appropriate notification whenever PPRA rights apply.

Student Record Requests
Parents or eligible students may request copies of educational records by contacting the school Registrar.
Requests should include:

- Student name
- Date of birth
- Description of requested records
- Parent or eligible student identification

Reasonable fees may apply for copies as permitted by law.

Transcript Requests
Official transcripts may be requested through the Registrar.
Transcript requests may require:

- Verification of identity
- Written authorization
- Applicable processing time

Official transcripts are released in accordance with FERPA and school procedures.

Transfer of Educational Records
When a student transfers to another educational institution, Georgia Digital School will transfer educational records as permitted by federal and state law.
Records may be transferred without parental consent to another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, as authorized by FERPA.
The school works collaboratively with receiving schools to ensure continuity of educational services.

Student Withdrawal
Parents or guardians wishing to withdraw a student should notify Georgia Digital School as soon as possible.
Prior to withdrawal, families should contact the Registrar to:

- Complete withdrawal documentation
- Return school-issued equipment
- Resolve outstanding obligations
- Request records transfer
- Obtain final grades or transcripts

Withdrawal procedures must comply with Georgia Department of Education reporting requirements and Thomasville City Schools enrollment procedures.

Confidentiality of Student Information
Georgia Digital School employees are expected to maintain the confidentiality of student information obtained in the course of their employment.

Access to confidential educational records is limited to individuals with a legitimate educational interest or as otherwise authorized by law.
Unauthorized disclosure of confidential student information may result in disciplinary action and legal consequences.

Records Retention
Student records are maintained and retained in accordance with:

- Georgia records retention schedules
- Georgia Department of Education guidance
- Federal education laws
- Thomasville City Schools records management procedures

Annual Notification of Rights
Georgia Digital School provides annual notification to parents and eligible students regarding their rights under FERPA, PPRA, ESSA, and other applicable federal and state laws.
Updated notices will be distributed through official school communication channels and posted on the school website when required.

Questions Regarding Student Records
Questions regarding educational records, privacy rights, or records requests should be directed to:
Registrar
Georgia Digital School
Questions regarding FERPA, PPRA, or ESSA rights may also be directed to the Executive Director or other designated compliance official.

Who to Contact

Need Assistance With…	Contact Role	Person
Enrollment Records	Registrar	schooloffice@georgiadigital.org
Student Transcripts	Registrar	schooloffice@georgiadigital.org
Attendance Records	Registrar	schooloffice@georgiadigital.org
Withdrawal Procedures	Registrar	schooloffice@georgiadigital.org
Educational Records Requests	Registrar	schooloffice@georgiadigital.org
FERPA Questions	Operations Manager	Kris Rosenquist krosenquist2@georgiadigital.org
Directory Information Opt-Out	Registrar	schooloffice@georgiadigital.org
Parent Right-to-Know (ESSA)	Principal	Principal Brandi Beavers bbeavers2@georgiadigital.org

Need Assistance With…	Contact Role	Person
Special Education Records	Special Programs Academic Administrator	Dr. Jasmine Sadler jsadler@georgiadigital.org
Section 504 Records	Section 504 Coordinator	Dr. Jasmine Sadler jsadler@georgiadigital.org
Student Privacy Questions	Principal	Principal Brandi Beavers bbeavers2@georgiadigital.org

SECTION 10
School Operations
Purpose
Georgia Digital School (GDS) is committed to maintaining efficient school operations that support student learning, family engagement, and effective communication. The operational procedures outlined in this section are designed to ensure consistency, safety, and high-quality service while supporting compliance with Georgia law, Georgia Department of Education requirements, Thomasville City Schools policies, and applicable federal regulations.

School Hours
Georgia Digital School operates during regular business hours Monday through Friday.
School Office Hours
Monday–Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Students are expected to participate in instruction according to their assigned class schedules. Teachers may also schedule office hours, intervention sessions, tutoring, conferences, and student support meetings outside of regularly scheduled live instructional periods.

School Calendar
Georgia Digital School follows the official Thomasville City Schools Board-approved school calendar.
The annual calendar includes:
- First and last day of school
- Holidays
- Teacher workdays
- Professional learning days
- School breaks
- Grading periods
- State testing windows

The official calendar is published annually on the school website and may be updated as necessary.

School Closures and Emergency Notifications
In the event of severe weather, utility interruptions, technology outages, public health emergencies, or other circumstances affecting school operations, Georgia Digital School will communicate updates through one or more of the following:
- School email
- Telephone notifications
- Text messaging
- School website
- Canvas
- Student Information System notifications

Families are responsible for maintaining current contact information to ensure timely receipt of emergency communications.

Parent Conferences

Parents, guardians, and Learning Coaches are encouraged to communicate regularly with teachers regarding student progress.

Parent conferences may be scheduled:

- At the request of the parent or guardian
- At the request of school personnel
- During intervention planning
- Following academic or attendance concerns
- As part of MTSS, IEP, or Section 504 meetings

Conferences may be conducted virtually or in person when appropriate.

School Communications

Georgia Digital School uses multiple communication methods to provide timely and accurate information to families.

Official communications may include:

- Email
- Telephone
- Text messages
- Canvas announcements
- School newsletters
- School website updates
- Parent meetings
- Social media announcements from official school accounts

Families are encouraged to review communications regularly.

School-Sponsored Activities

Georgia Digital School offers opportunities for students to participate in educational activities outside the virtual classroom, which may include:

- Field trips
- Academic competitions
- Student recognition events
- Graduation ceremonies
- Orientation programs
- Family engagement events
- College and career readiness activities

Participation in school-sponsored activities is subject to school policies, eligibility requirements, and the Student Code of Conduct.

Field Trips and Educational Experiences

Field trips and educational experiences are designed to enhance classroom instruction and provide opportunities for student engagement.

Participation may require:

- Parent or guardian permission
- Completion of required school forms
- Compliance with the Student Code of Conduct
- Appropriate adult supervision

Parents or guardians remain responsible for student supervision unless otherwise specified by the school.
Transportation and admission costs may be the responsibility of the family unless otherwise communicated.

Visitors and Guests
Because Georgia Digital School operates primarily in a virtual environment, visitors are generally limited to approved school-sponsored activities, testing locations, and scheduled meetings.
All visitors must comply with applicable school procedures and safety protocols.
Unauthorized individuals may not participate in live instructional sessions or access confidential student information.

Volunteers
Georgia Digital School welcomes family and community volunteers when opportunities are available and consistent with school needs.
Volunteers may be required to:

- Complete volunteer applications
- Undergo background screening when required
- Follow school confidentiality expectations
- Comply with all school policies

Volunteer opportunities are coordinated through school administration.

Student Identification
Students may be required to verify their identity during:

- State assessments
- Course assessments
- Enrollment verification
- Virtual instructional activities
- Other school functions requiring identity confirmation

Identity verification procedures help maintain academic integrity and comply with state testing requirements.

Photo, Video, and Media
Georgia Digital School may photograph, record, or publish student participation in school-sponsored activities for educational, informational, or promotional purposes consistent with applicable law.
Parents or guardians who do not wish for their student's image or likeness to be used should complete the school's Media Release/Opt-Out Form during enrollment or notify the school in writing.
The school will make reasonable efforts to honor all valid media opt-out requests.

School Property
School-issued instructional materials, technology, and equipment remain the property of Georgia Digital School or its educational partners.
Students and families are responsible for exercising reasonable care of school property.
School property must be returned upon withdrawal, graduation, or at the request of the school. Failure to return school property may result in replacement costs or other actions permitted by law.

Lost, Damaged, or Stolen Property
Students and families should report lost, damaged, or stolen school-issued equipment immediately.
The school will determine whether repair, replacement, or restitution is appropriate based on the circumstances.

Distribution of Materials
Distribution of flyers, advertisements, petitions, promotional materials, fundraising information, or other non-school materials through Georgia Digital School communication platforms requires prior approval from the Executive Director or designee.
The school reserves the right to deny distribution of materials that are inconsistent with educational purposes or applicable law.

Copyright and Intellectual Property
Students and staff are expected to respect copyright laws and intellectual property rights when using instructional materials, digital resources, presentations, videos, music, images, software, and other protected works.
Unauthorized reproduction, distribution, or use of copyrighted materials may violate federal law and school policy.

Records Retention for Operational Documents
Operational documents, reports, and administrative records are maintained in accordance with Georgia records retention schedules and Thomasville City Schools procedures.

Questions Regarding School Operations
Families with questions regarding school operations should contact the appropriate school staff member.

Student Recognition Events	Contact Role	Contact
Field Trips	Community Engagement Specialist	Ms. Crawford ccrawford@georgiadigital.org
School Communications	Operations Manager	Mrs. Rosenquist Krosenquist2@georgiadigital.org
Media Release	Registrar	Schooloffice@georgiadigital.org

Volunteers	Operations Manager	Krosenquist2@georgiadigital.org
Lost or Damaged Equipment	Technology Help Desk	
School-Issued Property	Technology Help Desk	
Emergency Procedures	Principal	Bbeavers2@georgiadigital.org

Continuous Improvement

Georgia Digital School is committed to continuous improvement in all aspects of school operations. Families, students, and staff are encouraged to provide feedback regarding school programs, communication, and operational procedures through surveys, meetings, and other opportunities for stakeholder engagement.

Feedback is used to strengthen school systems, improve services, and enhance the educational experience for all students.

APPENDIX A: PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK SIGNATURE FORM

Parent and Student Agreements

By signing the Signature Page linked at the end of this handbook, parents confirm that they understand and agree to the following.

As a GDS student, I will

Attendance & Engagement

- Log in and actively participate in learning each school day.
- Attend all required live instructional sessions, interventions, conferences, testing activities, and school-sponsored events.
- Complete all required orientation activities before beginning instruction.
- Maintain consistent attendance and engagement through active participation, coursework completion, assessments, and communication.
- Participate from a safe, appropriate, and distraction-free learning environment whenever possible.

Academic Success

- Complete assignments, assessments, and coursework by established deadlines.
- Demonstrate academic honesty and adhere to all academic integrity expectations.
- Respond to communications from teachers, advisors, counselors, and school staff in a timely manner.
- Actively participate in discussions, collaborative activities, polls, chat features, and other instructional opportunities.

Technology & Virtual Learning Expectations

- Use school-issued technology and educational platforms appropriately.
- Protect passwords, login credentials, and school accounts.
- Report technical issues promptly.
- Follow all school technology, internet safety, and acceptable use expectations.
- Keep cameras on during live instructional sessions unless a documented and approved accommodation or exception is on file.

On my honor, I pledge that I will abide by the terms and conditions of GDS's Honor Code.

As a parent/guardian/LC of a GDS student, I agree:

Attendance and Monitoring

- Ensure students have daily access to required technology and reliable internet service.
- Support students in maintaining a structured daily learning schedule.
- Monitor attendance, grades, assignment completion, and course progress through the Learning Coach Portal.
- Support and ensure a minimum attendance goal of at least 95%.

Student Support

- Encourage active participation in live instruction, coursework, assessments, and school communications.
- Ensure students attend required instructional sessions, interventions, conferences, testing activities, and school events.
- Partner with school staff to address attendance, engagement, academic, or behavioral

concerns in a timely manner.
- Participate in required conferences, meetings, and intervention sessions.

Communication

- Maintain current contact information with the school.
- Review and respond to school communications distributed through approved channels, including email, phone, text messages, newsletters, and websites.
- Respond to school outreach and intervention efforts when concerns arise.
- Notify the school promptly when contact information changes.

As a GDS staff member, I agree:

Instruction & Student Success

- Provide high-quality virtual instruction aligned to Georgia standards.
- Deliver engaging learning experiences that support student achievement and growth.
- Provide instructional resources, intervention opportunities, office hours, and academic support services.
- Monitor attendance, engagement, academic performance, and student progress.

Communication & Family Partnership

- Maintain regular communication regarding student progress, attendance, and academic performance.
- Collaborate with families to support student success and address concerns promptly.
- Facilitate conferences, meetings, and intervention support as needed.

Technology & Training

- Provide access to approved educational platforms and technology resources.
- Offer training, technical assistance, and support for students and Learning Coaches.
- Promote responsible technology use and digital citizenship.

Student Support Services

- Provide services and supports in accordance with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Section 504 Plans, English Learner (EL) plans, McKinney-Vento requirements, and other applicable student support programs.
- Implement required accommodations and modifications in accordance with federal and state regulations.
- Foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive virtual learning environment for all students.

Attendance & Intervention

- Monitor student attendance, engagement, and assignment completion regularly.
- Students who miss two (2) or more consecutive school days of engagement fail to submit required coursework, or consistently submit assignments late may be subject to school outreach, intervention planning, and support services.
- Continued concerns may result in parent conferences, academic improvement plans, increased monitoring, and additional interventions in accordance with school policies and enrollment requirements.

Disclaimer: Failure to meet attendance, engagement, or communication expectations may result in intervention plans, administrative review, potential administrative course withdrawal, or other actions in accordance with school policy and state requirements.

Please click the link to complete this form **Parent/ Student Handbook Acknowledgement**