



GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY

A Title I School

District Handbook 2016-2017

Updated: August 29, 2016

This handbook sets forth general guidance for parents and students enrolled in the Georgia Cyber Academy. Georgia Cyber Academy is a charter school and is subject to the rules and regulations of all Georgia public schools. The charter school guidelines for Georgia Cyber Academy are available online at <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us>. A copy of this handbook is posted on the Georgia Cyber Academy Online School (OLS) and school website at <http://www.gacyber.org>. Welcome to Georgia Cyber Academy!

Dear Georgia Cyber Academy Family:

Welcome to the 2016-2017 Georgia Cyber Academy school year. At Georgia Cyber Academy, we are focused on student achievement and building a strong community among our staff, students, and parents.

Georgia Cyber Academy serves students in nearly every county across the state as the size of our school continues to grow. To best serve our students and families, Georgia Cyber Academy teachers and administrators have developed several exciting programs for students in grades K-12. These initiatives are briefly outlined in this handbook; your family will enjoy the greatest success in our school if you discuss your interest and participation in these programs with your teacher.

Our goals for this school year are for students to realize the highest levels of academic achievement and build a strong school community. A rigorous curriculum, coupled with supportive school programs, is designed with these goals in mind. Our entire staff is eager to support your student and family on the journey to academic excellence.

Georgia Cyber Academy celebrated our third graduating class this year in May 2016, and now the alumni and ambassadors from Georgia Cyber Academy are blazing a trail at an impressive list of college campuses across the state and the country. We are also excited to be governed by our Board of Directors, an impressive list of community members and parents from across Georgia focused on providing sound governance to the 14,000 students enrolled in Georgia Cyber Academy.

The Georgia Cyber Academy handbook contains important calendars, contact information, district policies, and descriptions of programs. This year promises to be the best one ever at Georgia Cyber Academy – we're excited to have you here with us.

Working together, we'll help all of our students have an exemplary, individualized, and engaging educational experience this year!

Best wishes for a great year,

Matt Arkin
Head of School
mdarkin@k12.com

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Atlanta, Georgia 30349
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School website: www.k12.com/Georgia Cyber Academy

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K12 Customer Support: 1-866-968-7512

CUSTOMER CARE – Choose option #1 if you need assistance with:
Materials
Navigation/Login
Usernames/passwords

TECHNICAL SUPPORT – Choose option # 2 if you need assistance with:
Hardware/ Software
Platform – ONLINE SCHOOL
Blackboard Collaborate

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For more information on the Georgia Cyber Academy Board of Directors, including meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes, please visit the Georgia Cyber Academy website:

[www.k12.com/Georgia Cyber Academy/who-we-are/board](http://www.k12.com/Georgia%20Cyber%20Academy/who-we-are/board)

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GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY - ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2016-2017

August 15, 2016	First Day of School
September 5, 2016	Labor Day
October 10, 2016	Columbus Day
November 21-25, 2016	Thanksgiving Break
December 12-16 2016	Winter Georgia Milestones EOC (HS)
December 21, 2016-January 4, 2017	Winter Break
January 4, 2016	Teacher Workday (Student Holiday)
January 5, 2017	Second Semester begins
January 16, 2017	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr
February 20, 2017	Presidents' Day
April 3-7, 2017	Spring Break
April 24-28, 2017	Georgia Milestones EOG, Grades 3-8
May 1-5, 2017	Spring Georgia Milestones EOC Testing
May 26, 2017	Last Day of School
June 3, 2017	Graduation
June 19-23, 2017	Georgia Milestones EOC/ EOG Retesting

**When teachers are out of the office for holidays, outings, professional development, state testing, or any other event for which there has been prior notice, students are to follow the instructional schedule that is provided through the OLS, Online School assignments, and any other assignments that are provided by the teachers.*

OVERVIEW

Georgia Cyber Academy Vision

Georgia Cyber Academy students will emerge as confident leaders in the 21st century global community through a holistic approach to rigorous academic standards, a commitment to individualized learning paths, and attention to the growth of each student as a civic minded contributor both within their local communities and beyond.

Georgia Cyber Academy Mission

The mission of the Georgia Cyber Academy is to provide an exemplary, individualized, and engaging educational experience for students by incorporating school and community/family partnerships coupled with a rigorous curriculum along with a data-driven and student-centered instructional model. Student success is measured by valid and reliable assessment data, parent and student satisfaction, and continued institutional growth within the academic community.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Georgia Cyber Academy shall not discriminate in their educational programs, activities, or employment practices based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, ancestry, or any other legally protected classification.

This policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Georgia Cyber Academy Human Relations Act. Information relative to special accommodation, grievance procedure, and the designated responsible official for compliance with Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 may be obtained by contacting the school Title IX coordinator, Lori Medeiros at extension 128.

Enrollment Policies

Health and Immunizations Policy

All students must comply with the requirements of the State Immunization Code. Details of Georgia state requirements are listed below excerpted from the GA DOE website.

Immunizations & Health Certificates (Forms 3300 and 3231)

Form 3300 (Certificate of Eye, Ear, Dental Exam)

A student, regardless of grade level, who has never been in a Georgia public school must provide certification of eye, ear, and dental examinations on the Georgia Department of Human Resources Form 3300. Any child admitted to school without a certificate must present one within 60 calendar days. Forms may be obtained and completed at the local public health departments or physician offices.

Form 3231 (Certificate of Immunization)

Georgia Law requires children attending school (Kindergarten – 12th grade) to be age appropriately immunized with all the required vaccines at the time of first entry in school. A new entrant is a child entering a school in Georgia for the first time or entering after having been absent from a Georgia school for more than 12 months or one school year. All students, regardless of grade and including foreign exchange students, must have the Georgia Department of Human Resources Form 3231 immunization certificate marked “Complete for School” unless any of the following situations exist:

1. Medical exemption: In this case, the 3231 has an expiration date no more than 12 months

- from date of issue. There must be an annual review of the medical exemption, and the certificate must be reissued with or without indication of the medical exemption.
2. Religious exemption: For a child to be exempt from immunization on religious grounds the parent or guardian must furnish the school with a notarized statement, and it must meet the following criteria:
(A) state that their religious beliefs conflict with immunization requirements; (B) the statement must be signed and dated by the parent/guardian; (C) the statement must be notarized, dated, and signed by a Notary Public; (D) the statement should be submitted to the school in lieu of an immunization certificate (form 3231); (E) the statement does not expire.
 3. Waiver of 30 calendar days granted to new entrants by the superintendent or designee.
 4. Waiver of 90 calendar days may be granted by the superintendent or designee to students entering Georgia public schools from out of state, if documentation is on file from the county health department or a medical doctor stating that an immunization sequence has been started and can be completed within the 90 day waiver period.
 5. Immunizations are required for diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, hepatitis B, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chicken pox). Protection against each of these diseases must be addressed on the form 3231. The form can be computer generated, and if the child attends more than one school, an original or a photocopy of the form must be submitted to the second school.

Sixth Grade Requirements

All currently enrolled children entering sixth grade on or after July 1, 2015, must meet the following requirements:

1. Two doses of Measles vaccine, two doses of Mumps vaccine, one dose of Rubella vaccine, or laboratory proof of immunity against each of these three diseases.
2. Two doses of Varicella (chicken pox) vaccine or documentation of disease or laboratory proof of immunity. At the time your child entered school, only one dose of this vaccine was required.

Seventh Grade Requirements

Effective July 1, 2015, all children born on or after January 1, 2002 who are attending seventh grade and children who are new entrants into a Georgia school in grades eight through twelve:

1. One dose of Tdap vaccine
2. One dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine

For more information about Georgia's immunization program or the immunization requirements for school entry and attendance, please click on the following link to the Georgia Department of Human Resources: health.state.ga.us/programs/immunization/index.asp.

If Georgia Cyber Academy has not received immunization records for a student and/or a student is not compliant with Georgia's immunization requirements by October 15, the student will be withdrawn. Details on immunization and medical examination requirements for Georgia public school students is available on the state Department of Education website:

<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/askdoe.aspx?PageReq=ASKNewcomer>

Please contact the Georgia Cyber Academy office with any questions regarding health requirements.

Withdrawal Policy

Parents with students in need of withdrawing from the school must contact their homeroom teacher in writing via e-mail. K12 will issue reclamation labels for materials and equipment return.

Student Records

Georgia Cyber Academy maintains records concerning all children enrolled, including students with disabilities. Records containing personally identifiable information about or related to children with disabilities could include, but are not limited to, cumulative grade reports, discipline records, enrollment and attendance records, health records, individualized education programs, notices of recommended assignment, notices of intent to evaluate and reevaluate, comprehensive evaluation reports, other evaluation reports by public school staff and by outside evaluators, work samples, test data, data entered into the Penn Data system, correspondence between school staff and home, instructional support team documents, referral data, memoranda, and other education-related documents. Records can be maintained on paper, on microfiche, on audio or videotape, and electronically. Records can be located in the central administrative offices of Georgia Cyber Academy, electronic storage systems, and in the secure possession of teachers, school administrators, specialists, psychologists, counselors, and other school staff with a legitimate educational interest in the information contained therein. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality.

Records are maintained as long as they remain educationally relevant. The purposes of collecting and maintaining records are (1) to ensure that the child receives programs and services consistent with his or her IEP; (2) to monitor the ongoing effectiveness of programming for the child; (3) to document for the public school and the parents that the student is making meaningful progress; (4) to satisfy the requirements of state and federal agencies who have an interest in inspecting or reviewing documents concerning particular students or groups of students for purposes of compliance monitoring, complaint investigation, and fiscal and program audits; and (5) to inform future programming for and evaluations of the child. When educational records, other than those which must be maintained, are no longer educationally relevant, the public school must notify the parents in writing and may destroy the records or, at the request of the parents, must destroy them. Public schools are not required to destroy records that are no longer educationally relevant unless the parents request so in writing.

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

- (1) The right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within 45 days of the date Georgia Cyber Academy receives a request for access.
- (2) Parents or eligible students should submit to the school administrator (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The administrator or designee will arrange a records inspection for the parent or eligible student.
- (3) The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believe are inaccurate or misleading.

Parents or eligible students (age 18 and above) may ask Georgia Cyber Academy to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school administrator, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

Should Georgia Cyber Academy decide not to amend the record as requested by the parent or

eligible student, we will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures is available to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(4) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by Georgia Cyber Academy as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel), a person serving on the School Board, a person or company with whom Georgia Cyber Academy contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist), or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, Georgia Cyber Academy discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. (Note: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.)

(5) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Georgia Cyber Academy to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

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

(Note: Directory information includes the following information relating to a student: the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, and other similar information.)

Student records are maintained in the Georgia Cyber Academy district office. A copying fee of \$2.00 is assessed for records requested from the Georgia Cyber Academy office. Parents are encouraged to keep a copy of any records submitted to Georgia. If parents/legal guardians change their address, telephone, cell phone, or e-mail address, they are asked to notify their homeroom teacher immediately. Parents are responsible for keeping contact information current within the account setup section of the OLS. If a student transfers to another school from Georgia Cyber Academy, the policy is for the new school to contact Georgia Cyber Academy for records. An official records request should be submitted by the new school. Schools will contact the Georgia Cyber Academy administrative office for request of records. Please see specific instructions for parent request of records, please visit www.gacyber.org.

School Property and Supplies

Georgia Cyber Academy provides materials, books, and other curricular supplies. Georgia Cyber Academy also provides computers and printers to families according to financial need. These materials are school property and must be kept in good condition. Facilities that are used for Georgia Cyber Academy outings are considered school property, and the same expectations apply to the Georgia Cyber Academy outing facilities. Parents are responsible for the repair or replacement of all lost, stolen, or damaged school property. A list of property that must be returned is provided to parents. All property and equipment must be returned in good, working condition upon withdrawal from the program. All printed materials are copyrighted, and unauthorized copying of those materials is a copyright infringement. Materials cannot be sold or transferred and are to be used solely by the student in his or her studies while enrolled in the school. Parents are to comply with this policy and all the terms and conditions of the Use of Instructional Property Agreement submitted with the enrollment materials.

Computer Policy

Georgia Cyber Academy requires all families to have a minimum of one computer and printer that meet the minimum specifications necessary to access the K¹² Online School (OLS). Families must also have Internet access in order to participate in the school. Internet access is verified during the enrollment process and throughout the school year.

Minimum technical specifications are as follows:

Either a Windows-based or Apple Macintosh computer with an Internet connection

CDROM or DVD drive

Modem: 33.3 kbps modem or better (56 kbps modem is recommended).

External microphone

Internal or external speakers

Microsoft® Internet Explorer version 6.0 or higher or Netscape Navigator 7.0 (or higher).

[Adobe Acrobat](#) (7 or higher) and [Macromedia Flash](#) (Version 9)-These programs can be downloaded at no cost.

In certain cases based on financial need, Georgia Cyber Academy may loan a computer to an enrolling family. The income guidelines used to make this determination are the same ones set forth by the federal government for determining eligibility in the National School Lunch Program for free or reduced-price lunches. Details on income eligibility guidelines are available on the USDA website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/notices/iegs/iegs.htm>. Please contact your homeroom teacher if you believe you may qualify for this program.

Internet Service Provider (ISP) Supplement Program

Families who meet the requirements listed below are eligible to receive ISP supplement checks twice a year at the rate of \$9.95 per month (per household) for the school year. If multiple families reside in the same residence, only one family will receive the supplement. Checks are issued to the Legal Guardian listed on the student account. ISP supplement payments are made at the end of January and at the end of June, and is the responsibility of the legal guardian to ensure that all information listed in the Online School is accurate for mailing purposes. ISP checks are issued to the legal guardian on record.

The requirements for receiving an ISP supplement are:

(1) Families must participate in the Online School

(2) have a Georgia Cyber Academy computer based on family income,

(3) have adequate compliancy as described in the GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY Handbook in order to qualify for ISP supplement and (4) have an up-to-date address on file.

Eligibility for the ISP supplement begins the first full month after the family receives the loaner computer

package. In order to receive the supplement when issued in January or June, the student must be enrolled in the school at the time of supplement processing in order to be eligible to receive it. Please be aware that if an ISP check is lost, Georgia Cyber Academy does not automatically reissue a check to the family. If a check is not received or is lost in the mail, parents need to notify the Georgia Cyber Academy office within 30 days of checks being mailed to open an inquiry. At the discretion of Georgia Cyber Academy, non-compliant students may have ISP supplements denied. Checks not cashed within 90 days will not be reissued.

School Supplies

Georgia Cyber Academy provides most curriculum items needed to participate in school. However, there are times when household and consumable items are needed to complete a lesson. Be sure to use the Advanced Planning feature through the Online School to assist with upcoming lessons requiring certain materials.

Printer Ink Usage Guidelines

Printer ink is expected to be used sparingly and only for school needs. In order to conserve ink, it is recommended that your printer is set to always print in fastdraft mode. To set for fastdraft mode:

- Go to your Start menu
- Go to Printers and Faxes
- Right click on your printer name
- Scroll down to Properties
- Click on the Advanced tab
- Click on Printing Defaults
- In the drop-down menu under Print quality, choose FastDraft
- Click Apply, then click OK.

Ink refill kits are not recommended for use as they commonly are non-compatible and messy to administer. Georgia Cyber Academy does not provide printer ink or paper.

ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES

This document describes the policies and guidelines for the use of the Georgia Cyber Academy program and exists to ensure that all Georgia Cyber Academy students are aware of and understand their responsibilities when accessing and using Georgia Cyber Academy resources.

Georgia Cyber Academy reserves the right to update or alter this agreement at any time. Such revisions may substantially alter access to Georgia Cyber Academy instructional computing resources. Georgia Cyber Academy instructional computing resources include any computer, software, or transmission system that is owned, operated, or leased by Georgia Cyber Academy.

As a parent of a student enrolled in Georgia Cyber Academy, you should be aware of the following guidelines and expectations. Any activity that is not listed here, which violates local, state, or federal laws, is considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Guidelines. Failure to follow these guidelines could result in:

- Removal of your access to Georgia Cyber Academy instructional computing resources, which could result in your inability to complete learning activities
- Suspension or expulsion from Georgia Cyber Academy

Involvement with law enforcement agencies and possible legal action

Accountability

Posting anonymous messages is not permitted unless authorized by the teacher. Impersonating another person is also strictly prohibited.

- Use only your own user name and password, and do not share these with anyone.
 - Do not interfere with other users' ability to access Georgia Cyber Academy's Online School or disclose anyone's password to others or allow them to use another user's account. You are responsible for all activity that is associated with your username and password.
 - Change your password(s) frequently, at least once per semester.
 - Do not publicly post your personal contact information (address and phone number) or anyone else's.
 - Do not publicly post any messages that were sent to you privately.
 - Do not download, transmit, or post material that is intended for personal gain or profit, non-Georgia Cyber Academy commercial activities, non-Georgia Cyber Academy product advertising, or political lobbying on a Georgia Cyber Academy -owned instructional computing resource.
 - Do not use Georgia Cyber Academy instructional computing resources to sell or purchase any illegal items or substances.
 - Do not upload or post any software on Georgia Cyber Academy instructional computing resources that are not specifically required and approved for your assignments.
 - Do not post any MP3 files, compressed video, or other non-instructional files to any Georgia Cyber Academy server.
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Inappropriate Behavior

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- Removal of your access to Georgia Cyber Academy instructional computing resources, which could result in your inability to complete learning activities
- Suspension or expulsion from Georgia Cyber Academy
- Involvement with law enforcement agencies and possible legal action

Network Etiquette

At Georgia Cyber Academy, parents and students are expected to follow the rules of network etiquette, or “netiquette”. The word netiquette refers to common-sense guidelines for conversing with others online.

Please abide by these standards:

- Avoid sarcasm, jargon, and slang. Swear words are unacceptable.
- Never use derogatory comments, including those regarding race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, political persuasion, body type, physical or mental health, or access issues.
- Focus your responses on the questions or issues being discussed, not on the individuals involved.
- Be constructive with your criticism, not hurtful.
- Review your messages before sending them. Remove easily misinterpreted language and proofread for typos.
- Respect other people’s privacy. Don’t broadcast online discussions, and never reveal other people’s e-mail addresses.

Monitoring

Georgia Cyber Academy reserves the right to review any material transmitted using Georgia Cyber Academy instructional computing resources or posted to a Georgia Cyber Academy instructional computing resource to determine the appropriateness of such material. Georgia Cyber Academy may review this material at any time, with or without notice. E-mail transmitted via Georgia Cyber Academy instructional computing resources is not private and may be monitored.

Indemnification Provision

Georgia Cyber Academy assumes no responsibility for information obtained via the internet which may be illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive. Georgia Cyber Academy assumes no responsibility for any claims, losses, damages, costs, or other obligations arising from the use of instructional computing resources. Georgia Cyber Academy also denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through user access. Any statement accessible on the computer network or the Internet is understood to be the author’s individual point of view and not that of Georgia Cyber Academy, its affiliates, or its employees. Georgia Cyber Academy assumes no responsibility for damages to the user’s computer system.

Nothing in this policy negates any obligation the student and parent have to use the instructional computing resources as required in the Use of Instructional Property Agreement (“Agreement”) the parent or guardian signed as part of the student’s enrollment packet. In the event that this Code conflicts with the Agreement, the terms of the Agreement shall prevail.

Family Academic Support Team

GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY Family Academic Support Team

The Family Academic Support Team (FAST) provides academic assistance, encouragement, and support to students and Learning Coaches when such support/assistance is requested or deemed necessary to achieve academic success in the virtual school environment. Participation is required once a student/Learning Coach is assigned to the FAST. Any family that fails to respond or refuses to accept FAST assistance will be referred to administration where compliancy action is taken and may include a student's withdrawal from Georgia Cyber Academy.

GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY Family Academic Engagement Plan

Families who enroll their children in the Georgia Cyber Academy agree to the "I Understand" statements listed in the *Georgia Cyber Academy Parent Handbook*. These expectations represent the basic minimums to which parents and students must comply in order to experience success in the Georgia Cyber Academy. Parents are required to sign the handbook agreement survey, sent by the homeroom teacher, by the end of the first month of school. The vast majority of families who enroll with the Georgia Cyber Academy consistently and conscientiously comply with these expectations. However, as the school year progresses, some families may demonstrate the inability or unwillingness to fulfill one or more of the "I Understand" statements. In these cases, the Family Academic Engagement Plan (below) is initiated so that the school has a mechanism by which the responsible Learning Coach can be officially notified of behaviors that compromise the successful school experience of the student. Family Engagement Points (FEPs) are allocated as necessary until one of two outcomes occurs:

- The family acknowledges their deficiencies and implements programmatic changes to address the issues resulting in an improved school experience, or
 - The family continues to earn FEPs until ten (10) FEPs are reached. If/when this occurs, disciplinary actions are taken and could include a student's withdrawal from the school. Georgia Cyber Academy will notify the district of residence since the student is no longer enrolled in Georgia Cyber Academy.
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The chart below explains the possible deficiencies, points, and timelines that comprise the Family Academic Engagement Plan:

Issue/I Understand	Point Value	Minimum Expectation	When Recorded
Standardized Testing (such as, but not limited to, Statewide Testing Program, DIBELS, and PLA.	1 FEP per day for state mandated tests (student may not enroll the following year); 1 FEP for GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY tests (ie: PLA new students only) DIBELS)	Student will take all required state achievement/diagnostic tests.	At the end of each testing window
State Mandated Assignments (such as, but not limited to, Bridge Bill through GCIS)	1 FEP for each incomplete grade level requirement	Student will complete all required grade level assignments as mandated by GCIS.	At the end of each requirement deadline
Written & Verbal Communication (Email) /GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY Handbook	1 FEP for not returning signed copy of handbook(s) page <u>and</u> 1 FEP per week for non-compliance with responding to Emails and phone calls which require a response	Completing Handbook acknowledgement survey and respond via Email to all Emails requiring a written response	Handbook Agreement FEP assigned when required by FAST
Conferences (parent/ teacher, administrator)	1 FEP per missed conference or attempted meeting by staff and/or administration	According to schedule as specified by the teacher(s) and/or administration	Within one week after the missed conference (to give time to reschedule)
Logging into the ONLINE SCHOOL	1 FEP per week per subject for Student/Learning Coach not Logging in (unexcused absences only); 1 FEP per week for minimal to no progress with logged attendance (attendance only)	Student/Learning Coach will log into the OLS daily and meet daily requirements.	Recorded at the end of each week
Family Academic Support Team Back on Track Plan	1 FEP per Back On Track Plan that is not followed	Student and Learning Coach will follow the Back On Track Plan as agreed upon together with the Family Academic Support Liaison.	Within one week of the meeting to review the Back On Track Plan
Required 3231(Immunization) and 3300 (Health Examination Card) Medical Forms	1 FEP per week per student after 60 day deadline for each incomplete form	Parent will submit completed form within 60 days of enrollment.	At the end of each required deadline
Required Scheduled Academic Sessions and /or Related Services	1 FEP per week for each session/service	As specified in the student's IEP or ILP	Within one week of scheduled session - to allow time to review recorded sessions and/or attend a makeup session if permissible.

- The Family Academic Support Liaison will keep track of the FEPs accumulated by the Learning Coach/student.
- The Family Academic Support Liaison will keep the Learning Coach informed of the student's FEP status through telephone conferences and via E-mail.
- Students with IEPs may have additional parent contact, work samples, specialized academic sessions, and/or related services requirements (to be determined by the IEP team). Please refer to the Special Education Parent Handbook for specific department requirements.

All appeals are directed first to the Georgia Cyber Academy Administration, who will interview the teacher and the parent/Learning Coach and examine the applicable documentation. The final decision is made by the Head of School and/or the Deputy Head of School.

2016-2017

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

REVISED: 07.30.2016

WHAT IS A TITLE I SCHOOL?

The U.S. Department of Education provides federal Title I funds through the Georgia Department of Education, to local educational agencies (LEAs), and public schools with high percentages of economic need to help ensure that all children meet and/or exceed State academic content and student academic achievement standards. GCA is a Title I district utilizing a "schoolwide program." A schoolwide program uses Title I funds to support the educational programs of the school. Students and teachers receive benefits from federal funding that help support academic achievement. Consistent with section 1112 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), GCA will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for parent and family involvement which will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents and families.

WHAT IS A PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY?

The purpose of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy is to share how GCA works with parents and families to help all the students in the school meet high academic standards. It outlines rights and responsibilities, schedule of Title I and other important meetings, methods of communication, how to receive student academic expectations and learning goals, available resources, as well as how to provide feedback and become more involved in our school.

HOW IS IT REVISED?

The Parent and Family Engagement Policy is jointly revised annually by GCA Learning Coaches and the Family Engagement Team. We welcome Learning Coach feedback. [Click here for the 2016-2017 Feedback Survey.](#)

WHAT IS THE GOAL?

The goal of Parent and Family Engagement at GCA is for all parents and families to become active partners in the education of their student; to feel supported and empowered by staff; and to be connected to other GCA families and the GCA community as a whole in order to guide their student toward academic success. GCA has adopted the 6 National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships as the model for engaging parents, families, and students. The 6 National PTA Standards are:

- COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY
- SHARING POWER
- SPEAKING UP FOR EVERY CHILD
- SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS
- COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY
- WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES

WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES

Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

Georgia Cyber Academy welcomes all new families through the following initiatives:

STRONG START:

New families participate in “Strong Start” which is facilitated by the Family Academic Support Team (FAST). This program provides a foundation of information which initiates transition to the online educational model.

STRONG START WEBSITE:

gca.k12start.com – This website has a wealth of information for new or returning families including various resources, Frequently Asked Questions, and instructional videos.

SCHOOL-LEVEL ORIENTATIONS:

Elementary, Middle, and High School hold a series of orientation sessions to foster connections between staff and families and help orient students to our school environment. Sessions cover topics such as navigating the Online School, where to go for help, schedule planning, and more.

LIVE HELP SESSIONS:

All departments provide live help sessions throughout the year. Families can attend at any time to get academic or other support. These sessions are for new and returning families and are posted in the announcements section of the Online School and/or are listed on the [GCA Events Calendar](#).

GCA WEBSITE:

gacyber.org - This website is for current Georgia Cyber Academy families and has a wealth of information such as: staff contact, school news, school and events calendars, department information, Georgia Milestones resources, and much more.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning by providing multiple forms of communication to inform families of academic resources, opportunities and events in school newsletters, the school website, weekly teacher emails and course announcements.

School activities that promote effective communication:

MONTHLY FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER:

The *Georgia Cyber on My Mind* monthly newsletter is sent via email to connect parents and families to community events, workshops, resources, technology support, Parent-Teacher-Student Organization updates, and other valuable information.

MONTHLY DISTRICT TOWN HALL MEETING:

These meetings are held monthly to inform all parents and learning coaches of volunteer opportunities, upcoming events, department news, ways to further help their student at home, Title I information, as well as other school news. During these meetings, parents and learning coaches will receive information on how to collaborate on a variety of initiatives and share in the planning and revision of family engagement programming. During these meetings, parents and learning coaches will have an opportunity to hear news from school leaders. Details and links to all District Town Hall meetings and recordings can be found on the [GCA Events Calendar](#).

PHONE CALLS:

Phone calls are made by teachers to students and learning coaches at various points throughout the school year to inform, connect, and provide support.

EMAILS:

Emails are sent by elementary, middle, and high school teachers and administration to provide school, course, and district-specific information to students and learning coaches.

AUTOMATED PHONE AND TEXT MESSAGES:

School personnel utilizes an automated message system to send broadcast messages to learning coaches with important reminders and announcements.

ANNUAL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY:

Conducted annually to assess the effectiveness of the school and its teachers. Parents and learning coaches are encouraged to share their thoughts on teacher and school communication, level of academic support provided, outings, resources provided, scheduling, opportunities for greater family involvement, and more.

CLASS CONNECT RECORDINGS:

All live Class Connect sessions are recorded for convenience and flexibility. Class Connect session recordings are available from the Online School in both the learning coach and student accounts. These recordings are approximately one hour each and give detailed content area instruction on a variety of topics.

PARENT-TEACHER-STUDENT ORGANIZATION NEWSLETTERS:

The Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) provides regular newsletters in order to inform all GCA families of PTSO events, programs, volunteer opportunities, and more. Families can find additional information about the PTSO and how to become a member at www.gcaptso.org.

INSTRUCTIONAL CALENDARS:

Elementary School and Middle School Social Studies Teachers provide Monthly Instructional Calendars (MIC) which inform students of the required lessons and assignments each month. Students should complete the lessons and assignments as indicated on the MIC. Access to Monthly Instructional Calendars will be provided to students and learning coaches through the Online School, via email, and/or posted on the school website (gacyber.org).

EVENTS CALENDAR:

The [GCA Events Calendar](#) contains details about in-person events and online support sessions. In-person events are planned by our school, teachers, and parent leaders all over the state in order to provide opportunities to meet other GCA families. Online support sessions cover a variety of topics. View the [GCA Events Calendar](#) for details.

FORMS IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES:

During the initial enrollment process, the language needs of a parent is assessed. If a language barrier is determined, the enrollment package will be provided in the known language. If the language is unknown the Head of School will be contacted for further assistance. Please contact your child's homeroom teacher for more information.

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

School activities that promote student success include:

SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACTS:

GCA staff and parents/learning coaches work collaboratively to develop the Student-Parent-Teacher Compact as part of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy. This Compact outlines how parents/learning coaches, school, staff, and students share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents/learning coaches will build and develop a partnership to help students achieve the state's high standards.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLANS:

An Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) is a written plan which defines the academic needs and strengths of a student based on data, including input from the parent/learning coach, student, and teachers. The ILP is created collaboratively with the student's homeroom teacher and parent/learning coach.

PARENT UNIVERSITY:

Teachers and administrators lead parent workshops on a variety of topics throughout the school year to assist parents in helping their student academically. The Parent University schedule is sent via email, newsletter, and listed on the GCA website. All sessions are held online. Session details and recordings are posted on the [GCA Events Calendar](#).

GCA RESOURCE ROOM:

The online [GCA Resource Room](#) provides families with useful, interesting, inspiring and engaging supplemental educational content. Visit <https://www.pinterest.com/gcaresourceroom/> to access the [GCA Resource Room](#). If you don't have a [Pinterest](#) account, go to <http://pinterest.com> and click "Join Pinterest". Choose how you'll sign up: using Facebook, Twitter or your email address. After you've filled out your information, click "create account".

SCHOOL AND PARENT-LED EVENTS:

Social and academic outings are planned by teachers and parents all across the state. School/teacher-led event details are located on the [GCA Events Calendar](#) which can be filtered by region. Parent-Led event details are located on the [GCA PTSO Parent-Led Events Calendar](#).

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS:

GCA hires all teachers as Highly Qualified. We assign teachers to their subject area and/or grade level of expertise. Parents will receive notification if a non-highly qualified teacher is assigned as the child's teacher of record in an academic content area for four consecutive weeks or more.

PARENT RIGHT TO REQUEST TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS:

At GCA, we are very proud of our instructional faculty who are highly qualified to provide your student a quality rigorous education. As a Title I school, we must meet federal regulations related to teacher qualifications as defined under the United States Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). These regulations allow you to learn more about your child's teachers' training and credentials. At any time, you may inquire:

- Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching,
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. GCA does not currently employ paraprofessionals. Our staff is committed to helping your student develop the academic knowledge and critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school and beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers and paraprofessionals are highly skilled. If you have questions regarding your student's teacher, please contact the school or department director.

REGIONAL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATORS:

Regional Family Engagement Coordinators (RFECs) provide regional family support to specific counties with the goal of increasing academic achievement for all students within their covered counties. RFEC support includes in-person events, local resources, and individual support. The following counties are supported by an RFEC: Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Gwinnett, Henry, Newton, Paulding, and Rockdale.

REGIONAL FACEBOOK GROUPS:

GCA PTSO regional Facebook groups offer a beneficial avenue of communication for parents/learning coaches. The GCA PTSO regional Facebook groups are closed groups which are monitored by parent volunteers. Group members must be a parent or learning coach of a currently enrolled student. These groups are used as support for GCA families. For Facebook links and contact information, visit:

<http://www.gacyber.org/regional-contacts.html>.

SPEAKING UP FOR EVERY CHILD

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

School activities that promote speaking up for every child include:

BECOME AN ADVOCATE:

Parents/learning coaches are encouraged to understand how the school operates and how to raise questions or concerns about school policies or programs. We want to empower parents/learning coaches to understand how to effectively support student success at home and know where to find opportunities to learn how to better guide students. Parents/learning coaches are encouraged to attend monthly Town Hall meetings, annual Title I meetings, and other live help sessions to learn more about the school and become involved (see [Communicating Effectively](#) and [Sharing Power](#)).

REDUCED CLASS SIZE:

Title I funds are used to reduce class size. Hiring more teachers allows for a smaller student-teacher ratio, especially for at-risk students.

McKINNEY-VENTO ACT:

GCA participates in the education of homeless students by providing specific support and supplies to help with their education. A "homeless" student is any student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This could mean that a child is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship; is living in motels, etc. due to the lack of alternative accommodations; is living in emergency or transitional shelters; or is awaiting foster care placement. If you are currently experiencing homelessness and are in need of assistance, please contact your homeroom teacher.

MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM:

GCA participates in the Migrant Education Program (MEP). Migrant students in GCA are also provided additional support and supplies to help with their education. GCA receives the names of migrant students from the MEP regional office. If you would like more information, please contact your homeroom teacher.

SHARING POWER

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

School activities that promote sharing power include:

GCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Georgia Cyber Academy is governed by a Board of Directors which is composed of nine community leaders, some of whom are GCA parents. Notice of GCA board

meetings can be found on the school website. The GCA Board of Directors share in the creation and revision of district plans and policies. Parents are encouraged to submit their interest in becoming a board member during annual elections. Board policies, meeting dates, and minutes can be found here: <http://www.gacyber.org/board-of-directors.html>.

ANNUAL TITLE I PARENT MEETING:

Parents/learning coaches are invited to review and revise all Title I and school plans. Invitations for this review are sent via email, included on the GCA school website, and located on the [GCA Events Calendar](#). All plans are attached to the email, so parents can review the current plans before attending the meeting to suggest revisions. Parents/learning coaches provide feedback primarily through an online survey but may also do so during Title I or family engagement meetings.

During Title I meetings, the Title I Director discusses portions of the plans which need review. All feedback is welcomed and noted for potential changes. Parents/learning coaches share ideas by using the microphone or typing feedback into the chat box. Parents/learning coaches are welcome to contact the Title I Director or Family Engagement at any time with feedback on the plans:

Joy Peterson, Title I Director: jpeterson@gacyber.org

Kristy Howard, Elementary School Family Engagement Coordinator:
krhoward@gacyber.org

Veronica Okpani, Middle School Family Engagement Coordinator:
vokpani@gacyber.org

Maria Blencowe, High School Family Engagement Coordinator:
mblencowe@gacyber.org

ANNUAL SURVEY:

A parent and family survey is conducted annually to assess the effectiveness of the school and its teachers. Parents and families are encouraged to share their thoughts on family-teacher communication, level of academic support, outings, resources, scheduling, opportunities for greater family engagement, and more. Results from this survey are used in the planning of future parent and family engagement programming.

COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY

Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and participation.

School activities that promote collaborating with community include:

REGIONAL COMMUNITIES:

GCA families are divided into twelve regions across the state. Each region has Regional Leaders who communicate and provide information on activities going on in the region for the purpose of fostering community within the school. To find out more visit:

<http://www.gacyber.org/regional-contacts.html>.

PARENT-TEACHER-STUDENT ORGANIZATION:

The mission of the Georgia Cyber Academy Parent-Teacher-Student Organization (GCA PTSO) is a non-profit organization which is organized and operated for the charitable and educational purpose of assisting GCA in providing the best education possible to the children at the school. The GCA PTSO:

Serves GCA throughout the state of Georgia.

Finds and organizes volunteers for GCA.

Raises money for school programs and services.

Holds meetings to discuss current issues affecting our school with, teachers, students and learning coaches.

Supports school faculty and staff.

Hosts virtual and in-person events for GCA Families.

Manages Facebook groups for GCA parents/learning coaches.

Please see the PTSO tab on the GCA website (www.gacyber.org) or visit the PTSO website directly at (www.gcaptso.org) for more information.

PARENT LEADERSHIP:

Parent leadership is successfully achieved when parents and educational professionals build effective partnerships and share responsibilities, expertise, and leadership in decisions being made that affect student success, families, and communities. GCA parents and learning coaches have many opportunities to participate in this program including regional volunteer opportunities, GCA PTSO committees, academic student support, state-wide testing, and more. If you would like to volunteer as a Parent Leader, [click here](#), or email Maria Blencowe, Family Engagement Coordinator (mblencowe@gacyber.org).

Timelines for Document Revision

	Parent Involvement Plan	School-Parent Compact	Annual Parent Survey
March/April	Parent Involvement Policy feedback survey is reviewed by Family Engagement Coordinators.		The Family Engagement/Title I team and other school leaders meet to create the annual parent survey.
	Parent Involvement Policy is reviewed by parents during the Monthly Parent Meeting, and feedback is submitted via survey. <i>*Parent meeting recordings</i>		
April/May	Parent Involvement Policy feedback is reviewed and changes are made to policy.		All GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY parents are notified via email and monthly newsletter about the opportunity to provide input on the annual Title I Parent Involvement Survey. The survey is also available on the school's website.
June		<p>Directors and grade level leaders are trained by Family Engagement Team on appropriate goal and activity setting, so that all grade level compacts focus on 1-2 specific academic goal areas and related activities. Grade level staff members meet to revise Compact goals and ensure they are tied to school improvement goals that address the shared responsibilities of the parent, student, and school.</p> <p>The Family Engagement Coordinator sends a email to ALL GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY parents sharing the old compact and potential revisions along with a survey asking for parent feedback.</p> <p>The Family Engagement team meets to review Compacts and ensure they contain all required sections and address the shared responsibilities of the parent, student, and school.</p>	<p>Survey results are presented to all staff members and are posted on the school website. The Family Engagement/Title I team and other school leaders meet to revise parental involvement activities for the following school year, based on revised school goals and feedback from the parent survey.</p>

July	Parent focus groups are held to review the PIP and ensure it contains all required	Parent focus groups review the final compacts and make final suggestions for improvement.	
		The Family Engagement Team sends results to grade level leaders who meet with teachers to review feedback and make any revisions.	
August	Parent Involvement Policy is distributed via email to all families in the School Handbook. Receipt of Parent Involvement Policy is collected by online survey.	Compacts and accompanying agreement survey are distributed to families via email.	
August-October		Teachers discuss the Compact during fall conferences, and any families who have not completed the survey will do so at that time.	

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Resources and Support

Georgia Cyber Academy Faculty

We believe that a collaborative relationship between you and your teacher(s) is a vital piece to the overall success of every student. Your homeroom teacher has a wealth of knowledge and, thus, should be your first point of contact for all your questions. The Georgia Cyber Academy faculty and staff are committed to establishing a team effort to ensure that students are making progress and demonstrating compliancy in all areas.

Questions or Concerns

Georgia Cyber Academy staff recognizes life at school does not always run smoothly. As problems arise, school personnel and parents must collaborate to solve them. Georgia Cyber Academy staff also realizes parents and students do not always know what to do or where to seek out answers and often give up and become frustrated when problems remain unsolved. Please follow these procedures for general information or for assistance in resolving a problem:

Step 1. The Georgia Cyber Academy homeroom and/ or content teacher will monitor the concern to ensure resolution. Parents should directly contact K12 Technical support for any problems with school computers.

Step 2. If the issue or concern is about the Georgia Cyber Academy teacher, parents are advised to contact the Lead Teacher for that particular teacher.

Step 3. If the concern is not resolved at the teacher or lead teacher levels, parents/responsible adults are advised to contact the School Administrator/Principal.

Parents can also refer to the school's Resolution Matrix found on the school website- www.gacyber.org

Homeroom Teacher Responsibilities

- Collaboratively develop Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for your student
- Guide and direct the student through the Online School platforms
- Provide instructional support using the Georgia Standards of Excellence
- Facilitate academic conferences
- Review student submitted work throughout each grading term
- Maintain school work day Monday through Friday from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
- Respond within 24 school day hours to all e-mails and telephone calls
- Inform you of school updates/information
- Plan and attend regional outings/field trips
- Administer state required assessments
- Provide support in all areas of successful student learning and achievement.
- Complete semester progress reports and year-end report cards
- Be the first point of contact for parents and student

Content Teacher Responsibilities

- The content teacher is there to guide you through the content of the course, provide timely feedback on your assignments and course progress, and provide necessary remedial or enrichment activities. If you have questions concerning course content, course policies and procedures, or your progress, your instructor is the person to ask.
 - Your instructor will provide you with detailed contact information on how to get in touch with him or her via email or telephone. You can find this information in the Course Information Widget and the course syllabus (MS & HS only).
 - When should I contact my instructor?
 - I don't understand how to complete or submit an assignment.
 - I need extra help with a topic in the course.
 - I have a question about my grades.
 - I don't know when an assignment is due.
-

Advisors and Counselors

Georgia Cyber Academy Family Academic Support Team

The Family Academic Support Team (FAST) provides academic assistance, encouragement, and support to students and Learning Coaches when such support/assistance is requested or deemed necessary to achieve academic success in the virtual school environment.

Communication

Georgia Cyber Academy will send out information to students and parents using a variety of methods. Ongoing and consistent communication is required between the student, parent, and teacher(s) for school compliancy.

School communication includes:

- Email
- Telephone
- School Announcements
- Course News
- Principals Open Office
- Georgia Cyber Academy will use the phone numbers and email addresses provided. Therefore, it is important that this information be up to date.

Teachers as Mandated Reporters

Certain individuals, including teachers, school counselors, school psychologists and administrators, are mandated by law to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Failure to do so can result in legal liability for school staff. Teachers at Georgia Cyber Academy are trained to report such suspicions through the state department of Family and Children Services. More information can be found at:

<http://dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov/>

Student Programs

Special Education Services

Students with disabilities who qualify for special education services are able to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) based upon the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Georgia Cyber Academy delivers special education programming and related services in virtual and/or face-to-face environments to its students at no cost to the parent, guardian, or student.

Georgia Cyber Academy's Special Education program meets the individual needs of students by providing specialized instruction in the virtual setting that is designed to meet IEP goals and is based on the Georgia Performance Standards. Services are provided to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment as decided by the student's IEP team. Through the virtual learning environment, students are able to be served using consultative, co-teaching, collaborative, resource, and self-contained settings. Progress Monitoring of IEP goals is accomplished using a variety of data collected using the Georgia Cyber Academy instructional platforms as well as the individualized assessments designed by the special and general education teachers.

Mandatory, specialized instructional sessions are provided via *Blackboard Collaborate*. Those sessions are designed to aid in the continuous progression and mastery of students' IEP Goals and Objectives. The sessions are conducted by Georgia Professional Standards Commission Certified, Highly-Qualified, Special Education Teachers. These sessions are intended to provide support in addition to the student's standard coursework.

Special education and related services are determined through collaborative teamwork between the parent, student (as appropriate), teachers, therapists, and other appropriate Georgia Cyber Academy staff. A student's IEP team follows a systematic, problem-solving approach to devise a quality education for that student. All members of the Georgia Cyber Academy school community believe that varied instructional practices and learning environments benefit all children.

Students with disabilities can receive services based on the following eligibility categories: Autism, Deaf/Blind, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Emotional & Behavioral Disorder, Mild Intellectual Disability, Moderate, Severe, or Profound Intellectual Disability, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Significant Developmental Delay, Specific Learning Disability, Speech-Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Visual Impairment & Blindness.

IDEA Statement

The 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the more recent, 2004 Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) mandate that every school district in the country develop a system to identify children with disabilities, from birth through age 21, who live in the district. Georgia Cyber Academy will make a concerted effort to identify, locate, and evaluate children through 21 years of age who enroll in Georgia Cyber Academy and have a confirmed or suspected disability, in accordance with all federal regulations and state standards.

In addition, it shall be the policy of Georgia Cyber Academy that the child with a disability and his or her parent/guardian shall be provided with safeguards, as required by law, throughout the identification, evaluation, and placement process, and with a free, appropriate, public education.

Commitment to Serve Students

Georgia Cyber Academy is committed to the full implementation of NCLB and IDEA. When special education students are given the support necessary for success as outlined by their IEP, we believe they can achieve at the same high standards that are required for all students enrolled in our school.

Chapter 15/504 Service Plan

Under Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and under the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act, some school-age children with disabilities who do not meet the eligibility criteria may nevertheless be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations in instruction, facilities, and activities. Children are entitled to such protections, adaptations, and accommodations if they have a documented mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Georgia Cyber Academy supports the academic achievement of all students, particularly those most at risk. It is a priority to build strong parent/teacher/student relationships and address the specific needs of individual students. The Response to Intervention (RTI) Team at Georgia Cyber Academy uses a mixed problem-solving model to identify and serve students having academic, behavioral, or emotional difficulties. This process involves the student, parents, teachers, and other specially trained professionals and administrators.

The RTI Team uses a tiered model to incorporate problem-solving methods and research-based interventions into an Individualized Learning Plan for each student. The goal of the RTI process is for the teacher, learning coach, and/or parent to work together so each student may achieve a satisfactory rate of progress in the regular educational setting, preventing the need for more intensive services at a later period. All students in Georgia Cyber Academy participate in the RTI process, which is embedded in the school's instructional model. This model includes a standards based curriculum (GSE), direct instruction from highly-qualified teachers via Class Connects, and other supplemental programs as required and all state-mandated tests. A student who receives supplemental help from the homeroom teacher, such as through small group or individual Class Connects sessions, and/or other research-based interventions outlined in the student's ILP, may move up the tiered-process for more support. The homeroom teacher and the learning coach/parent form a partnership to determine which additional interventions are required to further support the student's learning needs.

In addition, older students (grades 4 and up) are encouraged to participate in this decision-making process. The homeroom teacher and learning coach carefully follow and document the student's response to those interventions, which must be monitored consistently for a period of six to twelve weeks. It takes time for data collection and review of this data to determine if the recommended interventions are effective. Once this data collection has occurred, the Student Support Team (SST) (made up of the homeroom teacher, the learning coach and/or parent, and other intervention specialists) reviews the student's OLS progress and/ or OMS/OHS assignments, the ILP, state testing scores, educational and family learning history, medical history, and results of intervention strategies previously tried with the student. If the interventions have shown little or no effect on student progress, SST may recommend a referral for further academic screenings, a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation, and/or referral to participate in other supplemental programs designed for more intensive student support. Since RTI is a process and not a program, students may move up and down through the tiers throughout their academic career. The goal of RTI is a pro-active one, to provide each student with the tools needed to achieve academic success.

Advanced and Advancing Learners Program

The Advanced Learner Program (AALP) is a supplemental academic enrichment program for K-12 students. Students in AALP are supported with enriched and/or accelerated course planning. Students in grades 4-8 who participate in the Advanced and Advancing Learners Program may also be eligible to receive an additional elective course. Participants in the AALP are expected to maintain exemplary progress and achievement. If you feel that your student qualifies for the program, contact your homeroom teacher for more information. Students must qualify each year to participate in the AALP program. High school students advanced learning options include Advanced Placement and honors courses.

Georgia Cyber Academy will offer the following AP and honors courses for 2016-2017 school year

- Ninth Grade Literature and Composition Honors
- World Literature and Composition Honors
- American Literature/Composition Honors
- AP English Literature and Composition
- AP English Language and Composition
- Biology Honors
- Chemistry Honors
- Physics I Honors
- AP Environmental Science
- World History Honors
- AP World History
- AP Government/Politics: United States
- CCGPS Advanced Algebra Honors
- Accelerated Algebra I/ Geometry A Honors
- Accelerated CCGPS Analytic Geometry B/Advanced Algebra Honors
- AP Calculus AB
- AP Statistics

Georgia Cyber Academy Complaint Procedure

Complainants are expected to address complaints or grievances beginning at the school level with the teacher first and then the administration. Central office personnel should be contacted next should parents feel the issues have not been resolved. Conferences forms/notes/minutes are kept on file as documentation of the issues.

Complaint procedures under the ESEA are available from the Operations Manager. The complaint procedures describe grounds for complaints, federal programs for which complaints can be filed, filing and investigation of a complaint, as well as rights to appeal. The address to which complaints should be filed is included in the procedure. Information regarding complaint procedures is distributed annually to school administrators to share with their staff. Copies are kept on file in each school's front office.

Complaint Procedures under ESEA

Grounds for a Complaint

Any individual, organization or agency (complainant) may file a complaint with the Georgia Cyber Academy Board if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges that a violation of Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under ESEA has occurred. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing.

Federal Programs for Which Complaints Can Be Filed

- a. Title I, Part A
- b. Title I, Part C
- c. Title I, Part D
- d. Title II, Part A
- e. Title III, Part A
- f. Title VI, Part B
- g. Title IX
- h. McKinney-Vento Act
- i. School Improvement 1003(g) SIG
- j. School Improvement 1003(g)—AARA (SIG—AARA)
- k. RT3
- l. Lowest Achieving Schools

Complaints Originating at the Local Level as part of its Assurances within ESEA program grant applications and pursuant to Section 9306 of ESEA, an LEA accepting federal funds must have local written procedures for the receipt and resolution of complaints alleging violations of law in the administration of covered programs. Therefore a complaint should not be filed with the Georgia Department of Education until every effort has been made to resolve through local written complaint procedures. If the complainant has tried to file a complaint with Georgia Cyber Academy to no avail, the complainant must provide the Georgia Department of Education written proof of their attempt to resolve the issue with Georgia Cyber Academy.

For additional information, please visit [GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY Complaint Procedure](#).

ACADEMIC FOCUS: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Georgia Cyber Academy is committed to providing a rigorous Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) based curriculum and solid system of support for all students. Georgia Cyber Academy students are provided coursework in math, English language arts/reading, science, and social studies. Georgia Cyber Academy also supplies standards-based review through ESGI and USA Test Prep.

Georgia Cyber Academy encourages students to complete assigned lessons within each content area course, since courses in the subsequent grade levels assume completion of lessons in the prior grade. A lesson is completed when the student has mastered the objectives as measured by the lesson assessment. It may not be necessary to teach every lesson if the student can demonstrate mastery of the objectives on the assessments. Learning Coaches and students should work very closely with their teachers to decipher the best course of action when determining lesson planning and assessment completion.

The Online School (OLS), OMS/OHS, is designed to collect and record data that substantiates the academic progress of each student. Therefore, it is mandatory that the OLS be used to enter attendance and assessment data that reflects the standing of the student. The OLS data serves as the primary tool for determining advancement into subsequent course levels. It is essential that parents of Georgia Cyber Academy students understand that, by enrolling in Georgia Cyber Academy, they agree to participate in the program as designed, including documenting regular and appropriate academic progress in the OLS, participating in required interactions with assigned teachers, and participating in school and state-mandated academic assessments.

Georgia Cyber Academy requires that parents/students submit work assignments to assist teachers with the decision to advance a student to the next course/grade level. Georgia Cyber Academy requires student work to be original, with appropriate citations for references to published works. Parents/ students are provided work assignment guidelines from their assigned teacher(s). Work assignments are submitted electronically. At Georgia Cyber Academy, we understand that our school is academically rigorous. Meeting the challenge of completing one year of course work in this model can be demanding. Our GA certified, highly qualified teachers are here to assist parents/learning coaches to meet the associated challenges.

A student identified as “academically at-risk” would hold a differentiated priority of contact as determined by the teacher and the parent, and increased interventions may be warranted. It is vital to note that academically at-risk students require a greater commitment to remediation and support. Students who are identified as academically at-risk will receive additional Response to Intervention (RTI) support outlined in their Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). Students and Learning Coaches are required to comply with all ILP recommendations in order to address the current academic needs of the student.

Verifying Mastery

It is important that students master and retain their work and not just mark through assignments. If at any time it becomes clear that a student has not mastered work that is marked complete, the lessons may need to be completed again. In addition, students should have their own student accounts and should not have access to teacher guides or answer keys. If a student's work ever shows evidence of intentional or unintentional academic dishonesty, the student lessons are marked incomplete, and the student must complete the work again. In addition, the student will need to meet with his or her teacher(s) for required online meetings via *Class Connect*. These required meetings are used by the teacher to assess student mastery. They are scheduled by the teacher(s) and attendance is required. Acts of plagiarism are monitored and not tolerated. If a student is found to have plagiarized, there will be an administrative meeting held with the student, parent, and school administration. Please read the Acceptable Use Guidelines found in this handbook for further clarification.

Objectionable Content Policy

There may be times when a parent finds certain lessons, books, or materials objectionable for various reasons. If a parent finds objectionable material, he or she should contact his or her Georgia Cyber Academy homeroom teacher via e-mail. Teachers will work with parents to find alternative lessons to meet the lesson objectives. The assessment for the lesson must be completed to show that the objectives have been met.

Instructional Time

Georgia requires all public schools to offer a minimum of one hundred and eighty (180) days of instruction each year. Additionally, statutes require a minimum number of instructional hours by grade level:

Grade Level	Yearly Hours	Weekly Hours	Daily Hours
K-3	810	22.5	4.5
4-5	900	25	5
6-8	990	27.5	5.5
9-12	990	27.5	5.5

In order for attendance to be counted as a full academic day, the minimum grade level daily hours must be met. Time towards daily attendance must come from the curriculum and instruction within the online school and live instruction. Supplemental time may be logged up to 12 hours per week. The full 180 days of attendance must be logged by Georgia Cyber Academy's last day of school.

Note: Curriculum content is not provided in the online school for grades K-8. Learning Coaches will receive instruction from the PE/ Health Teacher on how to complete the required Health and PE hours.

Attending Blackboard Collaborate (Class Connect)

We believe synchronous learning is important because it provides students the full benefits of our highly qualified instructors. The synchronous interaction provides immediate instructor and student feedback, reduces the feeling of isolation, fosters a sense of community with the learners, and offers a forum for student collaboration. By incorporating live and interactive learning opportunities in the online environment, teachers are leveraging synchronous learning to enhance learning and promote student engagement.

Our synchronous sessions should be personalized for the individual learner's needs. We feel it is important to allow the teacher flexibility to determine what should be covered, what students should be targeted, and when the sessions should be held to reach these students.

We encourage teachers to create engaging lessons to meet the needs of all learners. We advocate the use of the tools available in the synchronous platform to promote active engagement, social learning, and continuous feedback. Teachers should be creative and hold sessions that accommodate the different learning levels (high, average, and low). The synchronous classroom can be an equalizer for students of all abilities. Georgia Cyber Academy courses offer opportunities for students to meet online at the same time with the teacher of the course. These synchronous sessions are provided through Blackboard Class Connect.

Blackboard Class Connect offers technical support at the following web address:
<http://www.blackboard.com/support/index.aspx>.

Using the Help Desk and the Technical Support features will provide answers to the more common computer setup issues. If you have searched the site and did not find the answer to your computer issue, please call Blackboard Collaborate Support Tech Support at 866-388-8674 and choose option #2.

Class Connect Conduct for Parents and Students

When using a teacher's personal room, please always sign in using your first name and last initial. When attending a scheduled class connect, the system will automatically sign you in.

Students

- Arrive promptly at the scheduled time for the Class Connect session.
- Whiteboard and microphone privileges are assigned at the discretion of the teacher.
- Direct messaging conversations should be limited to the content of the lesson.
- Respectful and courteous behavior towards others is expected at all times.
- Non-participation or stepping away without the teacher's approval is seen as an absence from the session.
- If there are multiple students in your home, each student needs to log in to a session individually.
- Students and parents are expected to follow the netiquette previously described.
- Students will not be allowed to cause disruptions to learning during class connect sessions including use of inappropriate language, posting pictures or images to whiteboard, disrespect of teachers or other students (if a student is causing disruption to learning, they are removed from class connect session and parents contacted).

Please keep in mind that individual teachers may have expectations that are specific to their classrooms.

Coursework

Accessing Your Assignments

One of the advantages to online learning is that all of your assignments have been created ahead of time and are available within the course. There are no surprises; because you have a course schedule, you know exactly when each assignment is due.

Submitting Your Assignments

Save all assignments that are completed and submitted to your instructor, just in case. Always save a copy of what you submit either on a flash drive, or on your computer's hard drive. If there are ever technical issues, you have the assignments ready to submit again if needed.

Grade Response Time:

Please allow a turnaround time of 3-5 school days after submitting an assignment during fall and spring semesters and one school day during summer semester; although you will often receive your grade sooner. For major projects, teachers may indicate a longer turnaround time for grading. Teachers will notify students when additional time is required to assess assignments such as projects.

Keep the turnaround time in mind when planning your schedule so that you can turn in assignments and still allow time for feedback.

Testing and Assessment Requirements

Georgia Cyber Academy students will participate in the state standardized tests as required by the state of Georgia. Testing will be conducted at a variety of sites around the state and proctored by Georgia Cyber Academy teachers. Efforts will be made to locate a testing site within an hour of your home, but in certain cases it may be necessary to travel longer than an hour. These tests are given over a one- to five-day period depending on the test and student's grade level.

- DIBELS (grades K-5)
- Georgia Milestones End of Grade (grades 3-8)
- Georgia Milestones End of Course (applicable high school courses)
- Georgia Alternative Assessment
- Access for ELLs
- PSAT (10th Grade)
- Performance Learning Assessment (PLA)

Specific testing dates and locations will be published no later than two weeks prior to the testing window. Please see the section on the "Family Accountability Plan" for information on the consequences of non-participation in mandatory standardized testing.

Assessment security is of utmost importance to Georgia Cyber Academy. In regard to testing security, Georgia Cyber Academy follows all Georgia Department of Education guidelines.

PLA is a computer adaptive assessment that allows you and your teacher to quickly assess the current achievement and potential educational needs of your student. PLA utilizes a web-based model to identify the instructional level of each student by using your student's answers to previous questions to adapt the difficulty of the subsequent question. By using PLA, you and your teacher will have the performance data necessary to tailor instruction to best meet your student's needs. Students will complete the PLA Performance Series assessment in the fall, or upon enrollment.

Georgia Milestones End of Course (EOC) Assessments

Georgia Milestones End of Course (EOC) assessments (formerly known as End of Course Tests or EOCTs) are required by the state of Georgia in some courses. Public school students enrolled in and/or receiving credit for one of these courses, regardless of grade level, are required to take the Georgia Milestone assessment upon completion of the course. This includes middle school students completing a course associated with a Georgia Milestones EOC assessment, regardless of whether they are receiving high school credit. The results of the EOC assessments will serve as the final exam in each course, contributing to the student's final course grade. Students enrolling into a public school from non-accredited programs are required to take and pass the Georgia Milestones EOC assessment prior to receiving credit for the course. It is the student's and parent's responsibility to contact the school or district for testing arrangements.

The courses that require the Georgia Milestone EOC assessments are as follows:

- 9th Lit/Comp
- American Lit/Comp
- Biology
- Physical Science
- Accelerated GSE Analytic Geometry B/Advanced Algebra
- Accelerated GSE Coordinate Algebra/Analytic Geometry A
- GSE Analytic Geometry
- GSE Coordinate Algebra
- GSE Geometry
- Economics
- US History

Please note: All students enrolled in EOCT courses are required to complete all USA Test Prep assignments. Middle School students taking the 9th Lit/ Comp EOC also have to take the ELA EOG for their grade level. Middle School students taking a Math EOC and/or Physical Science EOC, do not take the Math and Science EOG.

Advanced Placement Course Exams

There are other courses that do not require the Georgia Milestones EOC assessment but that students can take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment in lieu of the final exam. Those courses include:

- AP Macroeconomics
- AP Microeconomics
- AP Biology
- AP US History
- AP English Language and Composition

Public school students in the above AP courses may elect to take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment because students must take all Georgia Milestone EOC assessments prior to graduating from a Georgia public high school. It is assumed that students in AP courses are not taking the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment unless the facilitator notifies GaVS otherwise. For public school students enrolled in courses who may choose to take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment, the facilitator will receive an email during the semester with information on how to notify GaVS of that intent. (Refer to the handbook section titled AP Courses Georgia Milestone EOC Assessment Policy.) Upon completion of the 2nd semester (B or AB course) of the above listed courses, public school students are required to complete a Georgia Milestone End of Course assessment.

Beginning with summer semester 2014, public school students will take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment at their local school. Public school students should contact their facilitator to determine when their

school's next Georgia Milestone EOC assessment administration date will be held. For public school students who entered ninth grade for the first time before July 1, 2011, the numeric score on the EOC assessment counts as 15% of the student's final numeric grade in the course. For public school students who entered ninth grade on or after July 1, 2011, the numeric score on the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment counts as 20% of the student's final grade in the course. (State Board Rule 160-4-2-.13). A Georgia Milestone EOC assessment grade may only count in one course.

For example, a student who takes the US History Georgia Milestone EOC assessment may not count that Georgia Milestone EOC assessment grade in both a US History course and also an AP US History course. Also if a student is taking the course a second time, the first Georgia Milestone EOC assessment score cannot be counted as the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment grade. Non-public and out of state students are not required to take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment. Instead, those students will take a final exam inside the course. However, be aware that if a non-public or out of state student transfers from a non-accredited program to a Georgia public high school, all Georgia Milestone EOC assessments must be taken and passed to receive credit for the course and meet graduation requirements.

Attendance and Truancy

As a public charter school, Georgia Cyber Academy is required to monitor student attendance in accordance with all applicable statutes and State Board of Education Rules. Georgia Cyber Academic teachers and administrators monitor student attendance regularly. All Georgia Cyber Academy students must be legal residents of the state of GA and provide proof of residence at the time of enrollment and re-enrollment.

Upon written request from a parent or guardian, the teacher may excuse a student's absence from school for the following reasons (with appropriate documentation, as determined by the school):

- Student illness
- Quarantine
- A serious illness or death in a student's immediate family
- A court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
- Religious holidays (24 hr. advance request only)
- Educational tour/trip (24 hr. advance request only)
- A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for, or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave.

Excused Absences

School staff registers absences as excused only for those reasons cited in the Georgia Cyber Academy School Code. The reasons cited are personal illness or quarantine, health care, death in the immediate family, approved educational travel, and religious holidays or religious instruction.

Unexcused Absences

When students are absent for reasons other than those permitted under the Georgia Cyber Academy School Code (see "Excused Absences"), those absences are recorded as unexcused absences.

When the teacher does not receive an e-mail within three days of an absence, such an absence becomes an unexcused absence.

Excuse Notes for Absence

For an absence to be registered as excused, a parent or guardian must furnish, within three days of the student's return to school, an e-mail explaining the absence. The E-mail must include student's name, the date of the absence, the reason for the absence, and necessary documentation as requested by the school.

When the teacher does not receive an e-mail within three days of an absence, such an absence becomes an unexcused absence.

Travel—Educational/Family

To prevent unexcused absences, families who wish to take an educational leave must request permission to be excused via E-mail prior to departure. The Head of School must approve absences in excess of five school days. The student is responsible for making arrangements with teachers to complete work missed during any absence.

Responsibility for compliance with state attendance statutes and regulations belongs to the school, but parents are obligated to keep an accurate record of daily attendance. A Georgia Cyber Academy student is considered truant if he or she fails, without a legitimate excuse, to log attendance for five non-consecutive school calendar days. After 10 days of unexcused absences, the student can be withdrawn due to non-attendance. Georgia Cyber Academy staff follows the procedures outlined below to notify parents of truancy status.

Process for Attendance Monitoring

- Students are required to follow the school calendar, which includes a minimum of 180 school days. Instructional time can be entered on any day (e.g., weekends, holidays, etc.).
- Students are expected to log into the OLS (online school), OMS/ OHS, each scheduled school calendar day. If attendance is not recorded on a school day as listed on the school calendar, the student is marked as having missing attendance. So, if the school calendar indicates Monday through Friday in a given week as "School Days", attendance must be entered on each day to not result in absences being recorded.
- Students who are unable to log onto the online school must notify the teacher as to the reason for the student's absence.
- Refer to the state guidelines for an attendance overview at: <http://archives.gadoe.org/pea/policy.aspx?PageReq=PEASchoolAttendance>
- Your Georgia Cyber Academy teacher will provide guidance in the area of collecting notes for absences.
- Switching of school holidays is permitted with prior teacher approval noted in Email.

TRUANCY:

1. A student is considered truant after five non-consecutive or consecutive days of missing attendance without an approved excuse given to the teacher.
2. In circumstances where there are questions of compliance with Georgia Cyber Academy policies, school personnel will assume the responsibility for recording student attendance directly.

After 10 days of unexcused absences, the student may be withdrawn from Georgia Cyber Academy due to non-attendance. Once a student is withdrawn from Georgia Cyber Academy, The parent/ guardian will be notified via e-mail and certified mail. The local school district is also notified of the withdrawal and reported to the GA Department of Education for local monitoring of the student's attendance in the local district or homeschooling status.

Process for Withdrawal of Truant Students:

1. Georgia Cyber Academy teachers monitor student attendance on a daily basis.
2. Georgia Cyber Academy teachers send an e-mail informing parents that their child has been absent (unexcused) for three or more school days. Parent/legal guardian should respond within 24 hours. Immediate action should be taken to correct the truancy problem.
3. If there is no response within 24 hours, Georgia Cyber Academy teachers forward the student's name, contact information, and file documentation (number of missed days, etc.) to the Compliance Liaison. A letter is sent to the family via email and ground postage that notifies the family that the child is truant.
4. If the truancy is not resolved within 24 hours after the 10th day of non-attendance, the student will be withdrawn from Georgia Cyber Academy. The parent/ guardian will be notified via e-mail and certified mail. The local school district will be notified of the withdrawal and reported to the GA Department of Education for local monitoring of the student's attendance in the local district or homeschooling status.

Attendance FAQs

1. When can I log attendance?

You are able to log attendance from your first day of school, August 15, 2016, until the last day of school, May 26, 2017.

2. Where do I need to log my child's attendance and how often?

Student attendance hours are logged in the attendance screen on the parent's OLS and must be entered daily.

3. Why should I log attendance?

In addition to meeting the legal attendance requirements for Georgia Cyber Academy and the Georgia Cyber Academy School Code, logging attendance provides you and your child with a log of the work accomplished.

4. What are supplemental hours?

Parents seek to provide the best possible education for their child and often enrich the child's curriculum with extra activities and family trips. Provided you complete your K12 coursework and course requirements (i.e. USA Test Prep etc.) first, these activities may be logged into the student's daily schedule and counted toward his or her mandatory hours of instruction if the activity directly relates to lesson objectives. However, it is important that parents/responsible adults initially discuss their supplemental activities with their students' assigned Georgia Cyber Academy teachers and then notify the teachers of the hours that are logged to ensure that the supplemental activities are recorded in the appropriate area(s) of the curriculum. No more than 12 hours a week of supplemental activities may be logged as attendance. Supplemental activities include outings based on Georgia Performance Standards and other learning experiences that address the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

5. What should I do if I forgot to log my child's supplemental hours?

You can go back and add hours after initially entering attendance. If you have already entered hours for the specified day and clicked the "submit" button, your teacher must add the hours for you. Contact your homeroom teacher, and they can assist you in entering supplemental hours.

6. How many hours should my child log if he or she enrolled after the start of school?

Hours are prorated based on a student's start date. Students who start after the first day of school should follow the daily or weekly attendance guidelines outlined in the Instructional Time section of this handbook.

7. Is there a maximum number of hours a day a student can log?

There is no maximum number of hours per day a student may log; however, the student's teacher must document hours in excess of 12 hours per day. Notify your teacher of each circumstance requiring more than 12 hours of instructional time.

8. Do I log attendance for the actual time the lesson took or just the default time that comes up on the Online School?

The default time is given as a guide for time to spend in each subject per day. If you consistently observe your student completing lessons before he or she accumulates the required amount of time, you may benefit from setting a time limit to each subject, rather than just expecting one lesson per day.

9. What should I do if my student is ill?

Send a Email to your child's teacher to communicate the student is ill. Any Online School progress that the student can comfortably achieve, such as reading from the literature selection, is encouraged. Attendance needs to be marked accordingly. Doctor's excuses need to be scanned and Emailed, or mailed, to the teacher. If no work can be completed by the student due to illness, mark the day as non-attendance.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY Students have	GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY Students have
The right to function and work in a positive learning environment free from disturbances created by self or others.	The responsibility to understand and accept that student learning is the primary purpose of our school and during instructional time to behave in a manner that promotes opportunities for optimal teaching and learning .
The right to participate in safe school outings.	The responsibility to respect the right of others to have a safe school environment in the presence of other students or people.
The right to have individual beliefs, ideas, cultures, religious practices, and differences respected.	The responsibility to accept the uniqueness of others.
The right to be treated with courtesy, fairness, and respect.	The responsibility to treat others with courtesy, fairness, and respect.
The right to have personal or school property respected.	The responsibility to respect and secure private and public property.
The right to participate fully in school life when all the established requirements have been fulfilled.	The responsibility to assure that participation in all aspects of school life is open to everyone.
The right to a clear understanding of what is expected of them.	The responsibility to know their role in the school community and to help others to understand their role.
The right to a fair hearing in cases involving the application of academic or disciplinary regulations.	The responsibility to understand and utilize the school’s procedures for resolving concerns, conflicts, and disagreements.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Georgia Cyber Academy expects all students to behave in a manner that is respectful of others and towards school property. Any and all violations of the Code of Conduct will be part of a student’s disciplinary record and may be used in a student disciplinary hearing pursuant to Georgia Cyber Academy’s progressive discipline process. Suspension of a student from school for not more than ten (10) consecutive days is considered a short-term suspension, not subject to formal rights of hearing or appeal. Although there are no such rights guaranteed by law, parents/guardians may contact the Office of the Head of School to discuss their disciplinary incidents and actions involving their children.

School Property

Georgia Cyber Academy provides materials, books, and other curricular supplies. Georgia Cyber Academy also provides computers and printers to families according to financial need. These materials are school property and must be kept in good condition. Facilities that are used for Georgia Cyber Academy outings/test site locations are considered school property, and the same expectations apply to the Georgia Cyber Academy outing facilities. Parents are responsible for the repair or replacement of all lost, stolen, or damaged school property. A list of property that must be returned is provided to parents. All property and equipment must be returned in good, working condition upon withdrawal from the program. All printed materials are copyrighted, and unauthorized copying of those materials is a copyright infringement. Materials cannot be sold or transferred and are to be used solely by the student in his or her studies while enrolled in the school. Parents are to comply with this policy and

all the terms and conditions of the Use of Instructional Property Agreement submitted with the enrollment materials.

Examples of misbehavior that will result in discipline:

1. Violations against property (including, but not limited to, damage to or destruction of school property or the property of others, failure to compensate for damage or destruction of such property, arson, breaking and entering, theft, robbery, possession of stolen property, extortion, trespassing, unauthorized usage, or vandalism, including all outing and test sites;
2. The use of profanity or obscene language, or the possession of obscene materials;
3. Gambling, including but not limited to, playing a game of chance for stakes;
4. Hazing;
5. Violent opposition to authority;
6. Using, possessing, or distributing tobacco or tobacco paraphernalia;
7. Using, possessing, distributing, or being under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances;
8. Using, possessing, distributing, or being under the influence of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances, except as prescribed by a physician;
9. Using, possessing, or distributing items or articles that are illegal or harmful to persons or property including, but not limited to, drug paraphernalia;
10. Using, possessing, or distributing weapons or other dangerous objects;
11. Possession of ammunition including, but not limited to, bullets or other projectiles designed to be used as a weapon;
12. Possession, use, or distribution of explosives or any compound or mixture, the primary or common purpose or intended use of which is to function by explosion;
13. Possession, use, or distribution of fireworks or any substance or combination of substances or article prepared for the purpose of producing a visible or an audible effect by combustion, explosion, deflagration, or detonation;
14. Violation of any local, state, or federal laws as appropriate;
15. Acts disruptive of the educational process, including, but not limited to, disobedience, disruptive or disrespectful behavior, defiance of authority, insubordination, failure to identify oneself, improper activation of fire alarms, or bomb threats;
16. Possession of nuisance devices or objects which cause distractions including, but not limited to pagers, radios, and phones;
17. Possession or distribution of slanderous, libelous, or pornographic materials;
18. Student attire or personal grooming which creates a danger to health or safety or creates a disruption to the educational process, including clothing which bears a message which is lewd, vulgar, or obscene, apparel promoting products or activities that are illegal for use by minors, or clothing containing objectionable emblems, signs, words, objects, or pictures communicating a message that is racist, sexist, or otherwise derogatory to a protected minority group or which connotes gang membership;
19. Criminal activities;
20. Falsification of any records, documents, notes, or signatures;
21. Tampering with, changing, or altering records or documents of the school district by any method including, but not limited to, computer access or other electronic means;
22. Impertinent or disrespectful language toward teachers or other school district personnel; sexual abuse and/or harassment;
23. Actions, including fighting or other assaultive behavior, which causes or could cause injury to students or other persons or which otherwise endangers the health, safety, or welfare of teachers, students, other school district personnel, or other persons;
24. Committing an act which inflicts great bodily harm upon another person, even though accidental or a result of poor judgment;

25. Violations against persons, including, but not limited to, assault or threatened assault, fighting, harassment, interference or obstruction, attack with a weapon, sexual assault, illegal or inappropriate sexual conduct, or indecent exposure;
26. Verbal assaults, or verbally abusive behavior, including, but not limited to, use of language that is discriminatory, abusive, obscene, threatening, intimidating, or that degrades other people;
27. Physical or verbal threats, including, but not limited to, the staging or reporting of dangerous or hazardous situations that do not exist;
28. Inappropriate, abusive, threatening, or demeaning actions based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation;
29. Disobedience or insubordination to teachers or other school district personnel;
30. Violation of school rules, regulations, policies, or procedures;
31. Other acts, as determined by the school district, which are disruptive of the educational process or dangerous or detrimental to the student or other students, school district personnel or surrounding persons, or which violates the rights of others or which damage or endanger the property of the school, or which otherwise interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school district or the safety or welfare of students or employees;
32. Retaliation

Students who fail to comply with these requirements are subject to the following disciplinary actions:

- **First offense:** A verbal warning will be issued.
- **Second offense:** An in-person, online or telephone meeting with the student, parent, teacher, counselor and, when deemed necessary, school administration will be arranged to discuss the student's behavior.
- **Third offense:** The student may be expelled from GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY. In the case of a severe offense and at the discretion of school administration, the verbal and written warnings may be bypassed. In cases of severe infractions, local legal authorities may be contacted.

The following are examples of unacceptable behavior subject to disciplinary action by the school district. Any student who engages in any of these activities shall be disciplined in accordance with this handbook. This handbook applies to all school property, school-sponsored activities or trips, the area of entrance or departure from events, and all school-related functions. This policy also applies to any student whose conduct at any time or in any place interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school district or the safety or welfare of the student, other students, or employees.

Cyberbullying

"Cyberbullying" occurs when a minor is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, or otherwise targeted by another minor using the internet, interactive and digital technologies, or mobile phones. In order for this behavior to be considered cyberbullying, the infraction needs to be between two minors. Cyberbullying is not tolerated in any form at Georgia Cyber Academy.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Assuming a false identity online to trick others.
- Spreading lies and rumors about victims.
- Tricking people into revealing personal information.
- Sending or forwarding mean text messages.
- Posting pictures of victims without their consent.

Effects of Cyberbullying include, but are not limited to:

- Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a student.
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical, emotional or mental harm.

- Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property.
- Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities.

How to Prevent and Stop Cyberbullying

Below are some preventative measures students can take to minimize their risk of being cyberbullied, as well as help stop the cyberbullying cycle:

- Never share personal information with anyone—even with your best friend. Remember, anything posted online may potentially be viewed by millions of people.
- Be careful with whom you interact online; block any messages from people you don't know.
- Do not pass along cyberbullying messages.
- Tell friends to stop cyberbullying.

What You Should Do if You Are Cyberbullied?

Anyone can be a victim of cyberbullying, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or financial status. The most important thing to do if you are being cyberbullied is to tell a trusted adult. An adult, whether it is a parent, teacher or school administrator, needs to get involved. Save and document all occurrences of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is no longer an anonymous crime; technology allows for easy tracking of the source. Cyberbullying is illegal and violators can be prosecuted.

For learning coaches — if your student comes to you and reports being bullied, report it immediately to the homeroom teacher.

If the accused is a student of the school, school administration will investigate the accusation. If the accusation is proven true, school discipline policy will apply. If the accused is NOT a student of the school, the school office will help the victim and his/her family contact local authorities and/or the resident school district.

School Discipline Policy for Cyberbullying

If a student is found guilty of cyberbullying, the following consequences will apply based on the severity of the infraction:

First offense or Minor Infraction: The student will receive a verbal warning and meet with the school counselor to learn about cyberbullying.

Second offense or More Severe Infraction: The student, parent or guardian, counselor and administrator will hold a conference. A record of the infraction will be placed in the student's file.

Third offense or Severe Infraction: Repeated offenses or severe infractions may result in the student being expelled from school.

To learn more about cyberbullying visit the following websites:

- <http://www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying/>
- <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/SafeSch/BullyiCyberBullyPrev/index.html>
- <http://www.xmarks.com/site/www.safeyouth.org/scripts/topics/bullying.asp>

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a concept used to address the many facets of authenticity within a student's work. A student who upholds a high standard of academic integrity maintains that the work he/she turns in is authentic and true to the knowledge he/she has acquired.

As the technology age has helped grant people quick access to any and all information on the web, academic integrity is becoming more of a standard in educational institutions as they begin to hold students to higher accountability measures. It is important that students taking courses online are equipped to appropriately utilize this technology.

Academic Integrity means unless otherwise instructed by your teacher or by a specific assessment, you are expected to honor the following principles while taking assessments:

- You and you alone will take the assessment.
- You will not copy or redistribute any part of the assessment in any way—electronically, verbally, or on paper.
- You will treat the assessment as "closed book"—meaning that you may not use any textbooks, references, or other materials (printed or electronic) during the assessment—unless your teacher or the specific assessment otherwise instructs (for example, you are specifically told to refer to certain pages in a book as part of the assessment).
- You will treat the assessment as "single browser"—meaning that during the assessment you may not log in a second time to your course, or open your course or related materials on another browser on another computer.
- Your answers will represent your work and only your work, free of any outside assistance. You will not plagiarize in any way.
- You will not confer with other students, family members, or acquaintances, either in person or through electronic communication, during the assessment.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism (representing another person's ideas, words, expressions, or data in writing or presentation without properly acknowledging the source).

- Submitting work through the use of another person's password/login is considered dishonest behavior. Student logins/passwords are confidential information that should not be shared with others. Any assignments, work, or projects posted while using another student's login will be considered plagiarism. Allowing another person, even a family member, to use your login and submit work on your behalf is also considered to be dishonest behavior.
- Cheating (intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized material, assistance, or study aids in any academic work). The use of online translators or any other type of assistance on graded assignments i.e. OLS assignments, quizzes, and tests is considered cheating, unless your teacher or the specific assessment directions inform you of exceptions. Cheating includes copying another student's work and submitting it as your own or sharing your work with another student. Be sure to get your teacher's permission before working with a classmate on an assignment.
- Performing work or taking an examination for another student.
- Submitting your own work from another course or previous semester and presenting it was completed for the current course.
- Falsification and/or misrepresentation of data to include submitting documents, records, or assessments that is falsified, invented, or contains fictitious data, results, or sources.

How to Avoid Plagiarism

When research is involved for class work, most often you will be asked to cite, paraphrase, or summarize your findings. These are appropriate ways to acknowledge other people's findings.

- "cite: to quote as an authority or example." yourdictionary.com. 2003.
- "quote: to repeat or cite, as for authority or illustration." Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. 11th ed. 2003.
- "paraphrase: a re-statement of the meaning of a passage of work, etc." Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. 11th ed. 2003.

- “summarize: a brief account of the substance or essential points of something spoken or written.” Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary. 11th ed. 2003.

Whenever you quote, paraphrase or summarize other people's ideas it is appropriate to acknowledge the source. When quoting someone's ideas, you should place the idea in quotation marks, and then make a note in parentheses next to it citing the author, source and date.

Always ask yourself, did this idea originally come from me or from someone else? If it originally came from someone else, remember to play it safe and cite the content with the author and source. Please note that Georgia Cyber Academy prohibits the use of online language translators in foreign language courses. If discovered, violations of this policy will be subject to the disciplinary actions as outlined below. If you have further questions, please contact your teachers. Georgia Cyber Academy utilizes Web tools available to monitor for student.

What Happens if a Student is Caught Plagiarizing?

If a student is found plagiarizing or not following academic integrity policies, disciplinary action will be taken. The student will be notified by the teacher regarding the offense. The teacher will also document the offense to the student’s virtual file in Infinite Campus.

First offense: the student will be required to redo the assignment. Based on the teacher’s syllabus, the student’s grade will reflect a reduction of points for the assignment.

Second offense: the teacher will notify the student and his/her learning coach and arrange a meeting to discuss plagiarism and establish a system to ensure the behavior stops. The student will receive a zero on the assignment or be asked to redo it for partial credit.

