



Greater Commonwealth Virtual School

GCVS does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, gender identity, disabilities, sexual orientation or any other protected class under the law.

Family Handbook

2026-2027

**205 Race Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
Phone: 413-475-3879
Fax: 413-475-3909**

Approved by the Board of Trustees: 6/8/2026

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Dear GCVS Families,

Whether you are joining the Greater Commonwealth Virtual School (GCVS) for the first time or returning for another year, we are thrilled to have you with us. The 2026-2027 school year is shaping up to be fantastic, and we cannot wait to get started.

GCVS exists because we believe every student deserves a learning environment that fits their life. As a public school of choice for families across Massachusetts, we offer a bridge between high academic standards and the flexibility of home-based virtual learning.

Our educational program is designed for students who thrive outside the "traditional" classroom. At GCVS, you will find a standard based online curriculum, lessons that meet all Massachusetts state requirements and instruction from specialists in virtual education.

Please take some time to review the 2026-2027 Family Handbook together. It is your reference guide for our policies and procedures. If anything feels unclear, we are always happy to answer any questions you may have.

Education is a dynamic process. Occasionally, we may need to update or add to this handbook. Any changes are reviewed and approved by the GCVS Board of Trustees. We truly value the partnership we share with our families. Let's make this school year an incredible journey together!

Respectfully,

Andrew Costa, Superintendent and the Senior Leadership Team

GCVS MISSION STATEMENT

The Greater Commonwealth Virtual School, a public school of choice, serves students from across Massachusetts who need a learning community that is accessible, flexible, and inclusive. As a pioneer of online learning, we empower our educators to tailor learning experiences to each student's strengths, interests, and challenges. We redefine and change how students and teachers engage through innovative technology, while ensuring mastery of competencies embedded in a rigorous curriculum.

GCVS STUDENTS

We serve as a public-school option for all students across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, including:

- Students who are unable to attend school in-person because of the student's medical condition
- Students who are out of school due to bullying or other safety concerns
- Students with disabilities
- Students out of school due to pregnancy or parenting
- Students who seek advanced coursework not available in their current school
- Students in training for competitive arts or sports whose schedules prevent them from attending school on a regular basis
- Students who have siblings currently enrolled at GCVS

GCVS ENROLLMENT AND CONTINUED ENROLLMENT

Students must be residents of Massachusetts and must provide proof of residency during the enrollment process as described in the [Enrollment Policy on the GCVS website](#). As a condition for initial and continued enrollment, families are required to sign off on the GCVS Family Handbook annually.

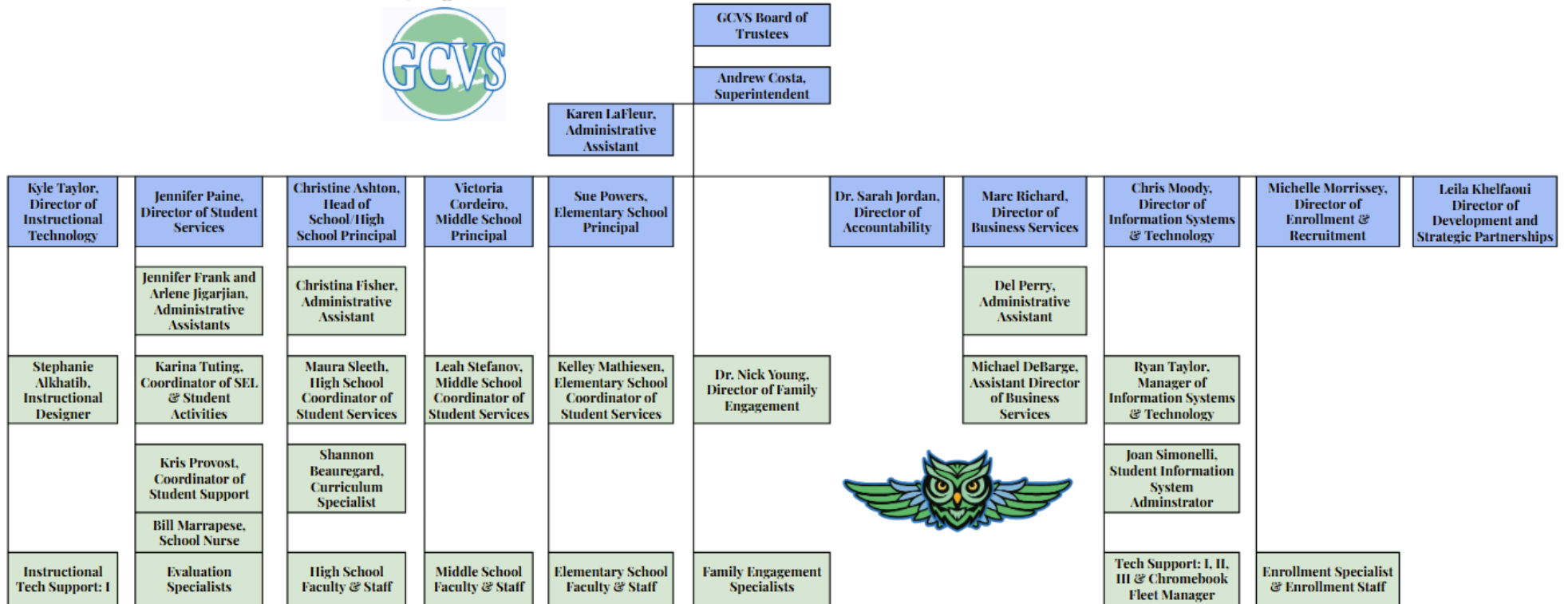
Once enrolled, students/families are required to provide continued proof of residency prior to the beginning of the next school year. In addition, at any time, should information arise suggesting a change in residency, GCVS reserves the right to verify a student/family status as a resident of Massachusetts and ask for an updated proof of residency. If residence changes, families are required to provide an updated proof of residency in order to remain enrolled as a student at GCVS. The family will be given an opportunity to submit information verifying residency; in the absence thereof, the student may be withdrawn from GCVS.

GCVS VIRTUAL SERVICES

- As a virtual school that serves the entire Commonwealth, all GCVS services are delivered virtually. Given the GCVS statewide geographic catchment, GCVS is not equipped to provide in-person services.
- As a Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School (CMVS), GCVS is not an Approved Special Education School (ASES) under [603 CMR 28.09](#).
- Upon enrollment, families acknowledge and accept that the GCVS program is fully virtual, and individualized in-person services are not available through GCVS.

- Once enrolled, students will receive appropriate educational supports and related services virtually, including:
 - Speech-language therapy
 - Occupational therapy
 - Counseling and social-emotional support
 - BCBA services
 - Nursing consults
 - Assistive technology support

2026-2027 Organizational Chart



GCVS DIRECTORY

GCVS Main Number (413) 475-3879

General Information Requests: info@gcvs.org

Role	Name	Email
Superintendent	Mr. Andrew Costa	acosta@gcvs.org
Head of School/Principal of the High School	Ms. Christine Ashton	cashton@gcvs.org
Principal of the Middle School	Ms. Victoria Cordeiro	vcordeiro@gcvs.org
Principal of the Elementary School	Ms. Sue Powers	spowers@gcvs.org
Director of Family Engagement	Dr. Nicholas Young	nyoung@gcvs.org
Director of Accountability	Dr. Sarah Jordan	sjordan@gcvs.org
Director of Enrollment & Recruitment	Ms. Michelle Morrissey	mmorrissey@gcvs.org
Director of Student Services	Ms. Jennifer Paine	jpaine@gcvs.org
Director of Development and Strategic Partnerships	Ms. Leila Khelfaoui	lkhelfaoui@gcvs.org
Elementary School Coordinator of Student Services	Ms. Kelley Mathiesen	kmathiesen@gcvs.org
Middle School Coordinator of Student Services	Mrs. Leah Stefanov	lstefanov@gcvs.org
High School Coordinator of Student Services	Ms. Maura Sleeth	msleeth@gcvs.org
Director of Information Systems and Technology	Mr. Chris Moody	cmoody@gcvs.org
Coordinator of SEL and Student Activities	Ms. Karina Tuting	ktuting@gcvs.org
Coordinator of Student Support	Mr. Kris Provost	kprovost@gcve.org
School Nurse	Mr. Bill Marrapese	bmarrapese@gcvs.org
Attendance Line	Ms. Karen Wickline	attendance@gcvs.org
High School Guidance Counselors	Ms. Brittany French Mr. Rob Moreau Mr. Jason Lessard	bfrench@gcvs.org rmoreau@gcvs.org jlessard@gcvs.org
Middle School Guidance Counselor	Mrs. Jennifer Ruhle	jruhle@gcvs.org
Elementary School Guidance Counselor	Ms. Jorja Hammill	jhammill@gcvs.org

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

GCVS does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, genetic information, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, and/or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, handicap, or any other protected class in its educational programs or activities. Handicapped students (as provided for in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) are identified, evaluated and provided with appropriate educational services.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives caregivers (parents, and legal guardians such as step-parents, grandparents, foster parents, and those designated by the court system or Caregiver Affidavit) and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights regarding the student’s education records. One of those rights is the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records.

There are several exceptions to FERPA’s general consent requirement. Under these exceptions, schools are permitted to disclose personally identifiable information from education records without consent to a third party. GCVS and its designated service providers have found that to best serve students’ educational needs, it is necessary to disclose some personally identifiable information to the certain classes of vendors that provide important services related to a GCVS education. Examples of such vendors are listed below. In all cases, these vendors will have agreed to ensure the confidentiality of the student’s name and address and to not use the information for purposes other than that contracted for the student’s education needs.

- Suppliers of computers and other educational materials for purposes of shipping to and from a student’s home;
- Customer care providers who handle support for Schoology, the Learning Management System;
- Companies that enter the student information into a computer database for use by school officials;
- Speakers or presenters presenting or participating in synchronous web-conferencing sessions;
- Outside parties that perform an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use employees.
- Other contractors and subcontractors that GCVS identifies as necessary to provide educational services.

TITLE IX/SECTION 504

It is the policy of GCVS to not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religious creed, religion, national origin gender, marital status, with regard to public assistance or disability in its educational programs, activities or employment policies. Students that are handicapped within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated and provided with appropriate education services.

The contacts for all 504 plans, provided planning, implementation, and monitoring are:

- **Elementary School: Coordinator of Student Services Ms. Kelley Mathiesen**
- **Middle School: Coordinator of Student Services Ms. Leah Stefanov**
- **High School: Coordinator of Student Services Ms. Maura Sleeth**
- **GCVS 504 Manager: Director of Student Services, Ms. Jennifer Paine**
- **Title IX Coordinator: Director of Accountability Dr. Sarah Jordan**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees is a group of people, appointed by the Commissioner of Education, who serve and work for the betterment of GCVS. At least one Board member must be a parent of a student at GCVS. The Board of Trustees set policies for the organization, appoints the Superintendent and oversee the financial health of the school.

GCVS CODE OF CONDUCT

Virtual education is a different experience from traditional education. While virtual learning takes place at home, more responsibility and higher expectations for students and parents/guardians are essential. Below are the guidelines for the schools, educators, students and parents/guardians.

GCVS Educators:

- Provide a safe, caring, equitable and inclusive learning environment.
- Teach and model positive behavior and good citizenship, including digital citizenship.
- Teach acceptance of and respect for others.
- Foster open and honest communication.
- Be respectful of students' time and notify them as soon as possible in case of class or meeting cancellations.

GCVS Students:

- Join their live meeting classroom using their GCVS account, be prepared, on time and ready to learn.
- Use online tools to engage in and add to the learning community (e.g. participate, ask questions, etc.).
- Follow the online classroom norms and expectations established by the teacher.
- Treat others with kindness, dignity and respect.
- Report activities motivated by bias, prejudice or hate to an adult or school staff member.
- Respect the privacy of everyone in the virtual classroom and avoid taking photos, screenshots or capturing images of other students.
- Not share images/videos from a virtual classroom on social media without written permission from GCVS.
- Not share the link to online meetings, activities or resources with anyone.
- Not participate in unauthorized online collaboration during tests and exams.
- Do not anonymize yourself when participating in online classroom activities. (e.g. do not change your name).
- Not engage in any activities, digital or otherwise, that could be deemed malicious or harmful to other students or GCVS staff.

GCVS Parents/Guardians:

- Assist students in finding an appropriate learning space (e.g. quiet, free from distractions as much as possible, does not compromise family privacy, etc.).
- Encourage their child to attend class on time and participate fully.
- Understand and respect that the learning environment is for their child. Students must express their own thinking and participate in their own learning process.
- **Provide for a backup to the school issued computer.**
- Respect the confidentiality of everyone in the virtual classroom. Recording of synchronous teaching sessions, taking photos, screenshots or capturing images of other students is prohibited.
- Recording of any meetings or using AI notetakers without GCVS permission is prohibited.
- Sharing of images/videos from a virtual classroom on social media is prohibited without the permission of GCVS.
- Provide students with guidance to ensure safety when working online and student oversight to prevent unauthorized collaboration during tests or exams.
- Not share the link to online meetings, activities or resources with anyone.
- Parents are discouraged from logging in with their child's account and navigating through the learning environment for the student. Parents are encouraged to assist their children by having the child navigate the online environment, as much as possible.
- Contact the educator directly to discuss concerns or ask questions about any aspect of the virtual classroom. This should be done outside the scheduled live instruction.
- **Under no circumstances should a parent/guardian interrupt class during synchronous learning (See *Learning Coaches Contract with School* p.12).**
- Communicate respectfully with all GCVS staff. Staff members have the right to terminate contact with a parent/guardian if the interaction is not respectful (e.g. yelling, inappropriate language, etc.).
- Provide current/up-to-date contact information.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR GCVS

GCVS with Caregivers & Learning Coaches: *What You Can Expect of GCVS*

GCVS recognizes that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be reached. To this end it should be the caregivers' expectation that:

- The school will read and respond to all messages, emails, or phone calls that ask for a response within 2 business days.
- The school will clearly and fully present its philosophy, program, and practices to caregivers and Learning Coaches during the admission/orientation process and encourage dialogue to clarify expectations and aspirations for the student.
- The school will seek and value the caregivers and Learning Coaches' perspectives on the

student.

- Teachers and leadership will be accessible to caregivers and Learning Coaches and will model candid, respectful, and open dialogue.
- The school will keep caregivers and Learning Coaches well-informed through systematic reports, conferences, website publications, calendars, and ongoing communication.
- The school will offer and support a variety of caregiver and Learning Coach education opportunities.
- The school will suggest effective ways for caregivers and Learning Coaches to support the educational process.

Caregivers & Learning Coaches Working with School: *What GCVS Expects of You*

Caregivers and Learning Coaches will recognize that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a positive and common vision of the goals to be reached. To this end, it is the expectation is that:

- Caregivers will read and respond to all messages, emails, or phone calls concerning your individual child and the school within 2 school days.
- Caregivers and Learning Coaches will be familiar with and support the school's policies and procedures.
- Caregivers and Learning Coaches will provide a home environment that supports the development of positive learning attitudes and habits and be present in the home during the school day to support the student.
- Caregivers and Learning Coaches will involve themselves in the school community.
- Caregivers and Learning Coaches will seek and value the school's expertise on the student.
- Caregivers and Learning Coaches will seek information directly from the school, consulting with those best able to address the concerns.

Caregivers and GCVS work together to create and sustain effective partnerships. Failure to comply with best practices of Caregivers and Learning Coaches working with GCVS jeopardizes the effectiveness of the program and the learning experience for the child. If the school cannot ensure clear and responsive communication with the caregivers and students in these three areas: academic achievement, full engagement in the life of the school, and clear, open and respectful communication, administrative steps will be taken.

LEARNING COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

The Learning Coach responsibilities detailed herein shall not abridge or violate any rights and/or protections afforded to parent(s)/guardian(s) under the law, including but not limited to, Section 504 of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Learning Coaches Contract with School

Learning Coaches (parents/guardians) recognize that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, creating a safe learning environment for all, open lines of

communication, mutual respect, and a positive and common vision of the goals to be reached.

Code of Conduct Violation by a Learning Coach/Caregiver

If a learning coach/caregiver violates the code of conduct outlined in this GCVS Family Handbook, the following steps will be taken. Offenses are counted as a combined total of infractions in any course.

First Violation:

The Principal contacts the learning coach/caregiver to discuss the incident. Together, they review the code of conduct outlined in the GCVS Family Handbook. The Principal will offer a follow up meeting with the learning coach/caregiver and appropriate staff, if relevant, so all parties included can be heard and work together moving forward.

Second Violation:

The Principal follows up with the learning coach/caregiver with a virtual meeting to discuss the infraction and how this behavior negatively impacts other students and staff. The Principal and caregiver may discuss if there is an alternative learning coach that would be a better fit for the role.

Third Violation:

The Principal and other administration (as applicable) will meet with the learning coach to discuss the severity of this infraction and possible further consequences. Such consequences could include a filing of educational concerns with appropriate state agencies and consequences under *Massachusetts General Law Part IV, Title I, Chapter 272, Section 40: Disruption of School Assembly*.

Academic Integrity Violation by a Learning Coach/Caregiver

When there is documentation of a learning coach or caregiver completing a student's assignment/coursework, the following steps will be taken. Offenses are counted as a combined total of infractions in any course.

First Violation:

The teacher (and other staff as applicable) will meet with the learning coach to discuss the infraction. Resources will be shared with the learning coach to outline the learning coach's role and the expectations on how a learning coach can appropriately support their student. The student will be given an opportunity to redo the assignment independently.

Resources may include: outline of learning coach responsibilities, videos, handout on ways to support student appropriately

Second Violation:

The Principal will meet with the learning coach/ caregiver to discuss the infraction. Together, they will review the importance of authentic student work and appropriate ways a learning coach can support their student during the school day. The learning coach/ caregiver will be offered support from their family engagement liaison. Once the meeting is held, the student may redo the assignment or test assigned by the teacher for half credit. Full credit may be granted at the discretion of the Principal.

The Principal will schedule a follow up meeting with the learning coach/caregiver and appropriate staff to ensure the student is submitting authentic work and the learning coach is modeling ways for the student to get support as needed on their coursework.

Third Violation:

The Principal and other administration (as applicable) will meet with the learning coach to discuss the severity of this infraction and possible further consequences. The student receives a zero on the assignment or test. Other consequences could include a filing of educational concerns with appropriate state agencies and the child being retained in the appropriate grade level.

Public Education in a Virtual School

All children are entitled to a free public education. GCVS is a public school meeting that need for certain students. Active and involved Learning Coaches (parents/guardians) are a requirement under the program.

GCVS is an inclusive school serving all students, including those with disabilities. As much as possible, GCVS places students in the general education inclusion classroom. It is the expectation that learning coaches will provide the one-on-one support that some students will need. If a learning coach cannot commit to that role, then GCVS may not be an appropriate setting for the student.

GCVS expects that:

Intentional communication is crucial to the success of GCVS students. The school uses a messaging system. This messaging system is designed for small-scale communication between teachers and their classes, small groups of students, or individual students and learning coaches. To that end:

- Caregivers must keep abreast of all phone communications with the school and respond to phone calls asking for a response within 2 school days. Caregivers must communicate all changes in phone numbers, addresses and emails by calling the main office at 413-475-3879 or by emailing info@gcvs.org
- Messages intended for the whole school or a large portion of the school community will be communicated via **ParentSquare**. ParentSquare has the capability to send voice messages and email. Caregivers will not have to respond to these messages unless prompted to do so.

Failure to comply with the code of conduct, principles of good practice and expectations of Learning Coaches jeopardizes the effectiveness of the program and the learning experience for students.

For students with an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) the following additional expectations are:

- Learning Coaches are the primary support person for the student in the home.
- We strive for inclusion and collaborative team teaching, and we try to avoid pulling students out during lessons and creating separate classrooms for students with IEPs.
- The work of the Learning Coaches includes monitoring of assignments, attendance, and

use of provided services and support.

GVCS shall be solely responsible for implementing all students' IEP and 504 Plans. No requirement shall be placed by GVCS on Learning Coaches to implement their student's IEP or 504 Plan.

Attendance is not optional regardless of student challenges. If specific attendance and academic plans are created to support the student, these plans must be followed. Failure to do so will jeopardize enrollment at GCVS.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

GCVS has a School Council in accordance with the requirements of the Education Reform Act of 1992. In accordance with the law, the council will have equal representation of Caregivers and Learning Coaches, teachers, administrators, a student representative, and a community member.

The goal at GCVS is to have one teacher and one Caregiver/Learning Coach representative from each grade band: elementary (grades K-5), middle school (6-8), and high school (9-12). The School Council will provide input into the educational goals for the school, consistent with educational policies and statewide student performance standards; and will assist the Superintendent in identifying the educational needs of students attending the school; and reviewing the budget as part of the Board of Trustees' budget process.

Caregivers/Learning Coaches are encouraged to participate on the School Council. Meetings are held monthly using the GCVS virtual classroom environment. All meetings will be publicly posted in accordance with Open Meeting Laws of the state of Massachusetts.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The GCVS Board of Trustees adopted the following Student Absences and Excuses Policy, in accordance with Massachusetts state law and regulations for public school attendance. Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success at GCVS. The GCVS Board of Trustees recognizes that caregivers of children attending GCVS school have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76, Section 1, requires that students attend school for 180 days, following the schedule set forth by the school's governing body. The Board of Trustees shall set the calendar for each school year for 180 days. **Students in the live program are expected to attend all live classes, with cameras on, in order to be marked as present. Students in the high school asynchronous program are expected to make daily progress in their work and to have daily live check-ins with GCVS staff.**

Additionally, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires elementary students (designated by GCVS as grades K-5) to receive instruction for a minimum of 900 hours during the 180 scheduled days of school each year. Middle and high school students (designated by GCVS as grades 6-12) are required to receive instruction for 990 hours during the 180 scheduled days of school each year. The table below shows the breakdown of hours by year and day. These comprise the expectations of attendance at GCVS.

Grade Level	Yearly Hours	Required Daily Hours
Elementary: (Kindergarten – Grade 5)	900	5
Middle/High School: (Grades 6-12)	990	5.5

Attendance in live class sessions is required on days when class sessions are scheduled and will be counted as part of the day's total hours. Student work done on non-school days is considered homework time and may not be counted as attendance in lieu of scheduled school days. Attendance at scheduled school meetups and at state-mandated testing (MCAS, etc.) also count toward these requirements for school attendance.

Attendance is taken daily for students in each of their live classes. In order for students to be marked present, they must show their presence by being on camera. The use of the camera allows GCVS staff to know a student is present.

Students may be marked present, absent, tardy or cut for each live class:

PRESENT- the student arrived to class on time and stayed for the entire class period, presented themselves on camera during attendance and participated in class.

ABSENT- the student did not attend class.

TARDY- the student joined class after class had begun (start time of class according to their schedule)

CUT- the student did not stay for the entire duration of class OR failed to respond when their teacher reached out to them during class (attendance taking with camera on, breakout room, chat, in discussion, etc.) and did not participate/engage in the lesson activities.

Students that are taking courses in the GCVS Asynchronous program must follow the attendance and course completion guidelines as established in the GCVS Asynchronous program.

Students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons: chronic illness/ongoing medical condition with up to date medical documentation; bereavement and observances of major religious holidays. Students may also be excused for other reasons with approval of the Principal or the Director of Family Engagement.

When a student is absent from any live class without verification from their caregiver, the student will be marked absent (A). When a caregiver notifies the GCVS attendance line and verifies the student's absence, the student will be marked absent unexcused (AU) and the caregiver's communication will be noted. When a caregiver notifies GCVS' attendance line, verifies their student's absence and provides medical documentation or the absence falls under reasons a student may be excused from school, the student will be marked absent excused (AE).

Caregivers can support their children by not allowing them to miss school unnecessarily. Families are encouraged to schedule non-essential family trips and vacations during scheduled school vacation periods and non-instructional days. As GCVS is a virtual learning institution, students

will need a reliable internet connection to access school on a daily basis. In addition, families should have a backup plan (including a backup to the school issued computer) for students to connect to school in order to limit absences due to events like power outages and interruptions in their internet connection. Absences due to vacations, other non-essential trips, and/or events during scheduled school days will not be considered excused absences.

Caregivers will contact the school's attendance phone line (413) 475-3879 **or** provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of a child by emailing **attendance@gcvs.org**. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible. In instances of chronic or irregular absence due to illness, the Administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences be provided to the School Nurse. When possible, parents/guardians should notify all members of a student's educational team when a student will be absent for a longer period, such as the Principal, teachers (including ESL and Special Education, if applicable), nurse, and counselors (if applicable) so that a plan can be created to ensure student success upon return.

Student Absence Notification System

As a partner in student learning, learning coaches work with GCVS staff to ensure students are attending and engaging in school daily.

GCVS will alert families of attendance concerns and work in partnership to keep students in *good standing* by meeting the state attendance requirements.

GCVS will communicate with parents as follows:

- Caregivers will receive an automatic message on the day of or the day following an absence (without caregiver verification of the absence) from live classes.
- Caregivers will receive notification from GCVS if the student has three consecutive absences (without caregiver verification of the absence) from live classes and/or has not logged in or completed asynchronous assignments. This would apply also to students in the asynchronous program, if they have not signed in and completed any work in a designated period.

Dropout Prevention/Exit Interview

Despite the best efforts of schools, parents or guardians, and community partners, some students may resist efforts to re-engage at GCVS. MA general law states:

No student who has not graduated from high school shall be considered to have permanently left public school unless an administrator of the school which the student last attended has sent notice within a period of 5 days from the student's tenth consecutive absence to the student and the parent or guardian of that student in both the primary language of the parent or guardian, to the extent practicable, and English. The notice shall initially offer at least 2 dates and times for an exit interview between the superintendent, or a designee, and the student and the parent or guardian of the student to occur prior to the student permanently leaving school and shall

include contact information for scheduling the exit interview. The notice shall indicate that the parties shall agree upon a date and time for the exit interview, and that interview shall occur within 10 days after the sending of the notice.

MGL c. 76 S. 18

The time frame may be extended at the request of the caregiver and no extension shall exceed fourteen (14) days. Under the direction of the Principal, the Director of Family Engagement may proceed with any interview without a caregiver present, provided that they have documented efforts to include the caregiver.

During the exit interview, the student shall be given information about the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school, the benefits of earning a high school diploma and the alternative education programs and services available to the student.

ATTENDANCE POLICY PERTAINING TO: TRUANCY

The personalization of a student's learning experience is the cornerstone of the learning model at GCVS. Unlike brick-and mortar schools, the GCVS system of attendance cannot just be measured by the number of hours a student spends in a building alone. As a public school, GCVS is required to ensure that all students adhere to the required number of hours of school attendance established by the Massachusetts General Law. Furthermore, GCVS recognizes that attendance is essential for students to participate in live instructional lessons, assessments, and classroom activities necessary to be successful in their classes. The GCVS Attendance Policy emphasizes that regular attendance is an essential part of each student's educational experience, providing opportunities for both intellectual and social growth. Please refer to MA general law, Chapter 76, section 1B for the Pupil Absence Notification Program. For students who do not attend school regularly, a definition of truancy has been established.

Truancy at GCVS is defined as:

1. Three (3) or more consecutive days of absences without verification from the caregiver and/or days in which no work has been completed, OR
2. Seven (7) or more absences without caregiver verification or absences that have not been excused in a semester or fourteen (14) absences without caregiver verification or absences that have not been excused in a full year, OR
3. Seven (7) or more days in which no work has been completed within a six-month period.
4. Not meeting the state-mandated minimum number of hours per week on a regular basis.

GCVS understands that there are legitimate reasons for a student to be absent from school on a limited basis, i.e., illness, unavoidable medical or dental appointments, funerals, etc. To the extent that these do not exceed seven days (7) or fourteen (14) half-days in a six-month period, absences that fall within these limits may be excused. Extended illness should be reported to the school nurse and physician documentation will be required, especially when they exceed the seven-day limit.

1. If the student is new to GCVS for the current school year, they may be assigned to a mandatory meeting with a member of the Family Engagement Team to discuss attendance requirements and how to plan for a successful schooling experience.
2. If attendance issues are identified for any student, the classroom teacher (s), related professional(s), or designated school administrator will outreach to the student and/or learning coach in an effort to re-engage the student in the learning process.
3. Attendance issue(s) may then be shifted to the GCVS Family Engagement Team to provide outreach to the learning coach and/or student. Such efforts will include a notification of the attendance concern and the support that GCVS personnel can offer.
4. A Family Engagement Team Member may meet virtually with any student having attendance concerns and/or their learning coach. The focus of such meetings will be to identify barriers affecting attendance and to create a plan to overcome them. Additional resources and strategies may be offered to the family as well.
5. Reasonable efforts will be made to schedule a more formal attendance meeting between the learning coach and school officials under the following circumstances:
 - Semester 1: When a Live student accumulates 5 absences or if a GCVS Asynchronous program student has not logged in for 5 consecutive days or falls 15% behind.
 - Semester 2: When a live student accumulates 10 absences or if a GCVS Asynchronous program student has not logged in for 5 consecutive days or falls 15% behind.

At this meeting, school personnel and the learning coach will meet to review the attendance requirements, identify the barriers affecting the student's attendance, and to create an Attendance Action Plan (AAP) designed to help the student meet the attendance requirements.

6. If necessary GCVS may file a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance) with the juvenile court, which may result in a hearing with the juvenile court, additional assistance or resources, and/or court mandated services.
7. If necessary, GCVS may contact the Department of Social Services to file a 51A report to seek additional support and/or services to ensure the welfare of the student is protected.
8. Retention in the current grade may occur if GCVS decides the student has not made substantial progress for grade advancement.
9. Potential withdrawal from GCVS per the outlined process for truancy below.

Process for Truancy

Once a truancy determination has been reached:

Step 1:

- The Director of Family Engagement or designated Family Engagement Specialist will contact the learning coach or caregiver to discuss the student's truancy circumstances. If there are no extenuating circumstances, and/or reasonable interventions have been attempted and determined to be unsuccessful, the Director of Family Engagement may proceed to Step 3. Similarly, the Director of Family Engagement may proceed to Step 3 without further interventions in situations where a student has not attended school for ten (10) or more consecutive school days, or has not submitted academic work for ten (10) or more consecutive days, if not otherwise medically excused per GCVS attendance

policies. In circumstances where the learning coach or caregiver is not reachable, a truancy determination letter will be sent to the learning coach and/or caregiver. This truancy determination letter will be sent certified mail, request a response within three (3) days, and offer an opportunity to request a formal truancy appeal meeting per Step 2.

Step 2:

- If requested by the learning coach with three (3) days of receipt of the truancy determination letter, a truancy appeal meeting will be convened within ten (10) school days to review the student's attendance, to determine the presence of extenuating circumstances directly impacting the student's attendance, and to modify the Attendance Action Plan to address additional barriers to attendance, if applicable. If a truancy determination meeting is not requested, or extenuating circumstances are not determined to be present by the Director of Family Engagement, the process will proceed to Step 3. If extenuating circumstances/medical documentation is provided to excuse the absences, the Director of Family Engagement may reinstate the AAP and allow the student additional time to meet attendance requirements, which will pause the truancy process. If, however, the student begins to accrue absences again at any point throughout the remainder of the school year, the truancy process will be resumed from the point that it was paused.

Note: If a truancy appeal meeting is requested by the learning coach, and the learning coach does not attend, they will be afforded one (1) additional meeting opportunity before proceeding to Step 3 if requested within three (3) school days.

Step 3:

- If the student still has not attended school and/or has not followed the guidelines as outlined in the AAP, the Director of Family Engagement or designee will contact the learning coach and/or caregiver to notify them that their student is being returned to their local school in their sending district. In situations where a formal truancy determination letter is mailed to the LC, which clearly explains that the student will be involuntarily withdrawn and returned to the home district on a designated date/time without a requested appeal meeting, and no appeal meeting is requested, this notification requirement will be considered completed.
- The Director of Family Engagement withdraws the student following GCVS procedures. Where the student is unsanctioned, the sending district is notified and the student is withdrawn from GCVS.

LEARNING COACH COMMUNITY

GCVS sponsors regular Learning Coach Community (LCC) Workshops dedicated to fostering greater knowledge of virtual schooling, Massachusetts State requirements, and the successes and challenges of being a learning coach. Moreover, these virtual or face-to-face meetings allow caregivers and learning coaches to network with and support each other.

LEARNING COACH COMMUNITY FOR STUDENTS WITH IEPs

All schools are required to have a Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), so that parents have a voice in the school. All parents and guardians of students with IEPs are immediately enrolled in the GCVS SEPAC, and will receive its monthly newsletter. The school is also required to provide an annual workshop on student rights, which will be held in the fall of each school year.

LIVE CLASS LESSONS

The live lesson policy applies to students taking GCVS live courses.

As part of the daily attendance, all students are expected to participate in all live lessons. GCVS uses Zoom as the live meeting platform which is integrated within Schoology. Students and Learning Coaches can access live class meetings through Schoology. All families will receive training on the use of Zoom during orientation and onboarding sessions.

Live lessons are mandatory for all students, except for absences as allowed by the school's attendance policy. All live lessons are recorded. When absent, students must watch all recordings or review all asynchronous material provided (if applicable) of missed classes and then complete any make-up work.

Students must present themselves on camera during the attendance taking portion of class. Failure to turn on the camera during attendance taking so that the teacher can see the student within the video platform may result in the student being marked as cutting the class. Repeated instances of students not turning on their camera for attendance purposes will result in notification to administration.

Live Lesson Conduct for Caregivers/Learning Coaches and Students

- Arrive on time at the scheduled time for the live lessons.
- Whiteboard and microphone privileges will be assigned at the discretion of the teacher.
- Direct messaging conversations should be limited to the content of the lesson. If a learning coach has a concern, wait until the end of class or send an email to the teacher about individual concerns.
- Respectful and courteous behavior towards others is expected at all times.
- Non-participation or stepping away without the teacher's approval will be seen as a class cut from the class.
- If there are multiple students in your home, each student needs to log in to a session individually.
- Students will not be allowed to cause disruptions during class sessions including but not limited to: use of inappropriate language, posting pictures or images viewable to other students, disrespect of teachers or other students. If a student is causing disruption to learning he/she will be removed from class and a caregiver will be contacted by the teacher. For any repeated offenses the student's Principal/Dean of Students will follow up with the caregiver.
- **Under no circumstances should a parent/guardian interrupt class during synchronous learning (See *Learning Coaches Contract with School*).**
- Individual teachers may have additional expectations that are specific to their classrooms.

GCVS ASYNCHRONOUS PROGRAM

The GCVS Asynchronous program utilizes its own asynchronous platform following the same curriculum and instructional resources as the live program. It is designed for students to work asynchronously through the curriculum. There is no live lesson requirement. Students work with and communicate with teachers as they progress through their course work. Asynchronous

courses mirror the rigor and structure of live classroom courses. Students in the asynchronous program need to maintain a high level of commitment and independence in order to be successful.

The asynchronous program is an option for any student in grades 9-12. A meeting with one of the high school guidance counselors is required prior to enrollment in the program so all expectations and requirements are understood. The High School Principal and the Director of Student Services (as needed) will review applicants prior to enrollment to determine if the program is the best fit for the student. If a student cannot maintain passing grades in the asynchronous program, they may be referred to the live program for more direct contact with teachers and additional support.

If a student has an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) the Director of Student Services and/or Special Education Teacher for the student will be included in the guidance meeting to determine if the program is the best fit for the student. Due to the asynchronous nature of the program, a review of the student needs as required by the IEP will be considered and potentially amended if a student participates in the GCVS Asynchronous program.

Students in the GCVS Asynchronous program are expected to comply with all requirements as specified in the GCVS Family Handbook.

GCVS Asynchronous Program Student Attendance

Students in the GCVS Asynchronous program must also meet the daily attendance requirements. GCVS requires that students have an opportunity to interact with educators each school day, including a daily “live” check-in between students and educators. This opportunity for a daily "live" check-in is provided by a designated GCVS staff member. This adult might be a teacher, a member of the Family Engagement team, an administrator, or an adult overseeing one of the in-person programs. Repeated failure to meet with the designated adult may lead to a home visit or a wellness check by local authorities to ensure that the student is safe.

Students are expected to log into the GCVS Asynchronous program and access their courses every day of the school week. The GCVS Asynchronous program tracks student progress, and these progress reports are monitored daily by teachers.

If a student is too ill to attend classes or check in, the learning coach must contact the attendance line. The Learning Coach must state their name, the name of the student, and why the student will not be logging into the GCVS Asynchronous program for that particular absence.

Attendance for Asynchronous Program students is considered as follows:

- **Present:** The student is up to date with GCVS Asynchronous program coursework and has completed the live check in with a GCVS staff member..
- **Absent:** The student is not consistently completing GCVS Asynchronous program coursework and has not completed the live check in with a GCVS staff member.

Online, Asynchronous Learning – Tips for Student Success

Online learning transfers much of the responsibility of learning to the student. Students will need self-motivation, time-management, and strong communication skills in order to be successful.

The following tips can help students be successful within the GCVS Asynchronous program:

- Maintain a positive, motivating learning environment.
- Plan for 5-8 hours of studying per course, per week.
- Take notes and review your notes before each assessment.
- Communicate with your teachers and guidance counselor on an ongoing basis.
- Attend teachers' office hours
- Take ownership of your learning.
- Recognize the difference between falling behind because you are not putting in the effort and not understanding a concept.
- Ask for help whenever you need it by calling, emailing, and chatting with your GCVS teachers.
- Celebrate your accomplishments.

CONDUCT

GCVS maintains guidelines for the behavior of students. These are common sense, truthfulness, respect for others, and respect for the school and its place in the community. Instances of disrespect for learning or property, lack of consideration for others, disruptive behavior, abusive language, etc. will not be tolerated. Offenses will be handled immediately by the faculty member involved and documented. Deliberate or repeated instances will be reported immediately to the student's Principal who will take appropriate action. Action may include loss of privileges, suspension from school, or expulsion. Any instances of physical, verbal or sexual harassment, bullying, unacceptable use of technology or any other conduct the Administration deems inappropriate may be grounds for disciplinary action.

BULLYING/CYBER BULLYING

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71 section 370

GCVS is committed to a safe and positive learning environment for all students, employees, volunteers and caregivers. All forms of bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited. Anyone engaging in bullying or cyberbullying shall be subject to appropriate discipline. GCVS has developed a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws. This plan is posted on the school website.

Pertaining the GCVS and in summary of MGL Chapter 71 section 370, **Bullying** is defined as the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property
- Places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the victim
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber-bullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include:

- The creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person.
- The knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages.
- The distribution by electronic means of communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons.

Harassment and bullying take many forms including: slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendos, demeaning comments, drawing cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats, or other written, oral or physical actions. "Intentional acts" refers to the individual's choice to engage in the act rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s). Bullying also includes the creation or distribution of AI-generated 'deepfake' imagery intended to harass or humiliate others.

If an individual feels they have witnessed or been a part of a possible bullying situation, an anonymous bullying form may be filled out. This form can be found in the Schoology school-level courses. (Ask a member of the Family Engagement team for the link, if needed.) A formal investigation will take place by appropriate GCVS administration staff.

Nothing in this policy requires the affected person to possess a characteristic that is a perceived basis for the harassment, intimidation, or bullying, or other distinguishing characteristics. All forms of bullying are unacceptable and when such actions are disruptive to the education process of GCVS, offenders shall be subject to appropriate staff intervention, which may result in administrative discipline or action.

This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the education environment. Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may still be prohibited by other school policies or building, classroom, or program rules.

Preventative educational counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to change the behavior of the aggressor and remediate the impact and safety of the victim and school community. This includes appropriate interventions, restoration of a positive climate, and support for victims and others impacted by such violations. False reports or retaliation for harassment, intimidation or bullying also constitute violations of this policy.

The Superintendent is authorized to direct the development and implementation of procedures addressing the elements of this policy, consistent with the complaint and investigation.

ANTI-HAZING POLICY

Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 269 sections 17-19

The term “hazing” means any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include, whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such treatment of that person or which subject or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

✓ Failure to Report Hazing

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

✓ Notification to Students and Student Groups, Teams and Organizations

The school shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization a copy of this policy. Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this policy to its members. Each of its members must acknowledge that they understand and agree to comply with its provision.

MANDATED REPORTING

Certain individuals, including but not limited to: 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 GCVS staff. Specific staff at GCVS are trained to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the student’s local Department of Children and Families (DCF). It is important to note that, in certain situations, truancy can be considered a form of neglect and may be reported to DCF or may result in a petition to the juvenile court of jurisdiction of a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA).

STUDENT HEALTH INFORMATION: IMMUNIZATIONS

State law requires that each student must present yearly evidence of compliance with the process of immunization prior to admission and required stages of child development. For more information on immunizations and health records, please contact the GCVS School Nurse.

GCVS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Family engagement is an essential part of student success at GCVS, which is why GCVS has a dedicated Family Engagement Team that is supporting the school community. To ensure a successful academic experience, caregivers, students and the school must work collaboratively.

SCHOOL EVENTS

Various school events will be announced regularly through school leadership. The dates and times of these events will be communicated through the ParentSquare. Virtual events will take place on an on-line video platform. These events include:

- Grade Level Assemblies
- High School Guidance Seminars and Workshops
- Transitions from Elementary to Middle School and Middle School to High School
- Guest speakers and special programs
- Virtual Meet-ups
- In-Person Meet-ups
- State-mandated MCAS testing

GCVS STUDENT CLUBS

GCVS strives to create a community for students and an environment that supports a true sense of belonging. Student Clubs are non-academic activities offered at GCVS throughout the year that meet this goal by creating space for students who share similar interests. Clubs will facilitate student socialization, community, and service.

Clubs will be sponsored by GCVS advisors who will welcome caregiver participation. Clubs may be added as interests arise. Club suggestions are always welcome; students with an idea for a new club should contact the Coordinator of SEL and Student Activities.

STUDENT FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES

While the Board of Trustees recognizes that fundraising activities are part of the school environment, the Board wishes to ensure that students are not exploited by the process. The Board supports student involvement in the sale of tickets to school events where sales are required.

Student publications which require the sale of advertising to sustain themselves and serve the student body may involve students in such sales. Charitable fundraising activities, especially those that are part of a community service event or program are encouraged provided such proposals are submitted to and approved by the Principal.

Other fundraising activities that wish to involve students in the fundraising process shall be submitted to the Principal for approval. For safety reasons and because the Board recognizes that community members receive requests for support from many worthy causes, activities such as door-to-door sales are prohibited.

All money collected from fundraising activities shall be immediately given to the Director of Business Services for deposit in a student activity fund. Any disbursements to pay for activities or publications shall be made by the Director of Business Services from said fund.

GCVS MEET-UPS

GCVS arranges a variety of special meet-ups for students and families throughout the school year. Families are encouraged to attend. While attendance is not required for students and caregivers,

meet-ups provide wonderful opportunities to meet teachers and staff, make new friends, and talk with fellow caregivers about school.

Unless otherwise stated, caregivers are responsible for the cost of transportation and any other fees. Time spent at a meet-up will be counted toward the required attendance for the day. For students who do not attend the meet-up, they are expected to attend classes as scheduled and complete planned work provided by their teacher(s).

GCVS meet-ups are designed to integrate with the curriculum. Some meet-ups will be specific to a certain grade cluster and may not necessarily include the whole school. Exceptions to this are the opening of school orientations and end of school picnics, where students from all grade levels attend.

Caregivers are responsible for supervising children at all times during meet-ups. Siblings and friends may be welcome; however, it is best to check with the GCVS staff first. Caregivers will receive a notice regarding any special trips or events via Schoology Messaging and/or School Messenger.

Family pets are not allowed at GCVS meet-ups. Please refer to **Animals Prohibited from School and Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)**.

VOLUNTEERING AT GCVS

Offering ways to build GCVS relationships by working together collaboratively with learning coaches and caregivers can only enhance the school community. GCVS welcomes learning coaches and caregivers to become involved and volunteer in a variety of ways. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the Coordinator of SEL and Student Activities. The coordinator will discuss volunteer opportunities and help you complete a CORI form which will be required as a first step in the volunteering process.

ACADEMICS

GCVS instills academic excellence and personal responsibility, inspires athletic and artistic accomplishment, and promotes a respect for diversity. Within a challenging and safe educational environment, educators at GCVS develop innovative and engaging learning experiences for each student.

Each student's grade-level program will typically include courses that meet or exceed Massachusetts curriculum standards. The curriculum is composed of lessons, video activities, online assessments, learning games, labs, physical experiences and published textbooks and workbooks.

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), GCVS, through its curricula and instructional materials, promotes respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. In accordance with district guidelines, families may request information from the Principal regarding curriculum content and may submit a written request to the Principal to opt out of specific portion(s) of the curriculum that conflict with their sincerely held religious beliefs.

Respect for each individual in the community defines the essence of human interaction at the school. Teachers share their passion for teaching and learning, and in doing so, inspire those around them. While laying the foundation to meet future challenges, each grade level strives to engage students in a fulfilling, rewarding experience. We work hard to make a rigorous curriculum developmentally appropriate and sound, establishing continuity across grades and subject areas.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Integrity means:

- Work on each assignment is original and completely the student's own work
- Student collaboration with another student on any assignment must be preapproved by the supervising teacher and recognized as a collaborative assignment
- Students will not engage in plagiarism. This includes, but is not limited to copying another's homework, papers, lab reports, quiz or test answers; acquiring or disseminating quizzes or tests before they are administered; or using information from the Internet, artificial intelligence (AI) or other outside sources without proper attribution.

Plagiarism is defined as: copying or using the ideas or words of another from any source and presenting these ideas or words as your own. GCVS teachers utilize a myriad of technologies to review, support, and check student work. If a student has not submitted original work and has copied or plagiarized work in any manner, the student will be subject to consequences determined by GCVS administration. Academic Integrity violations will result in consequences ranging from a warning to removal from the course with a failing grade.

The High School Academic Integrity Policy Steps are listed below. High School offenses are counted as a combined total of infractions in any course.

First Offense:

The student is made aware of the offense by the teacher and the Caregiver/Learning Coach are notified. The student can redo the assignment or test as assigned by the teacher.

Second Offense:

The student, the Caregiver/Learning Coach, and the Principal/Dean of Students are made aware of the offense by the teacher. The student, Caregiver/Learning Coach must have a meeting with the Principal/Dean of Students. Once the meeting is held, the student may redo the assignment or test assigned by the teacher for half credit. Full credit may be granted at the discretion of the Principal.

Third Offense:

The student, the Caregiver/Learning Coach, and the Principal/Dean of Students are made aware of the offense by the teacher. The student and learning coach must have a meeting with the Principal/Dean of Students to discuss the severity of this offense and possible further consequences. The student receives a zero on the assignment or test.

Subsequent offenses:

Further violations of the Academic Integrity policy could result in failure/loss of credit in the course.

The Middle School Academic Integrity policy below is grounded in a restorative educational model. This model is designed to focus from punitive consequences to skill mastery, emphasizing that academic honesty is a crucial component of a student's ongoing learning and development. When an infraction occurs, it is based on the individual class and not a combined total of occurrences.

First Offense:

The teacher meets 1-on-1 with the student. The student must redo the specific section or the entire assignment for a capped grade.

Second Offense:

Teacher-led meeting with the student and a parent/guardian/learning coach. Mandatory Reflection Assignment and original assignment must be resubmitted for a capped grade.

Third Offense:

Meeting with the Teacher, Student, Learning Coach, and Middle School Principal resulting in loss of credit for the assignment. The student will follow an academic integrity contract for the remainder of the semester.

Infraction Type	Grade Impact (1st Time)	Grade Impact (Repeated)
<i>Poor Paraphrasing</i>	Redo for full credit	Redo for max 70%
<i>Direct Copy/Paste</i>	Redo for max 80%	Redo for max 50%
<i>AI generated</i>	Redo for max 70% + Reflection assignment	Zero on assignment, no redo

The Elementary School policy is grounded in restorative practice and honest learning, meaning students have the opportunity to show what *they* know and what *they* can do. Our restorative approach focuses on building a foundation of trust and self-reliance. By focusing on restorative practices, we ensure that our students don't become afraid of making mistakes, rather become proud of their own original thoughts. *Infractions are handled on an individual class basis to ensure every teacher can support the student's specific needs.*

First Offense: The teacher will meet one-on-one with the student to discuss the infraction. It is a teachable moment. The student will be offered an opportunity to redo the specific section or whole assignment for full credit.

Second Offense: The teacher will meet with the student and their caregiver/learning coach to discuss the infraction. Part of the discussion will include conversation to understand why the student felt they couldn't use their own work. The student will be allowed to redo the assignment for partial credit.

Third Offense: If a student continues to struggle with honest learning, a meeting with the teacher, students, caregiver/learning coach and Elementary Principal. The students will be placed on an *Honest Learning* contract for the remainder of their time in the class.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AT GCVS

GCVS supports students and staff engaging through innovative technology. AI and Generative Artificial Intelligence (genAI) have become an integral part of modern society and its role in education continues to evolve. GCVS promotes the responsible and ethical use of AI at GCVS in alignment with the GCVS policy on Academic Integrity.

- Students may use GCVS approved AI and genAI tools only on assignments where the teacher has explicitly stated that such tools are allowed. If an assignment permits the use of genAI, specific guidelines will be provided by the classroom teacher.
- Student use of AI and genAI tools in the classroom should be restricted to those tools that GCVS has approved for student use.
- Students will not be asked to create accounts on any AI or genAI platform that is not approved by GCVS.
- There are many AI and genAI tools available (and under development) designed for educators to use in support of curriculum, planning and instruction. These tools are vetted for educator use by the GCVS Director of Instructional Technology. GCVS educators are provided with professional development opportunities to support such use.

In addition to violations of academic integrity, the following misuses are strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action:

- Students may not use AI to create, alter, or distribute images (deepfakes), videos, or audio that depict others. Specifically, using AI to generate explicit or suggestive photos by superimposing a likeness onto another image is a severe violation of school policy and Massachusetts state law. Such actions will be treated as high-level harassment and may be referred to law enforcement.
- Misuse of AI for harassment or academic dishonesty will result in consequences ranging from loss of technology privileges to suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity of the offense.

TESTING AT GCVS

Greater Commonwealth Virtual School is a public school and must administer the MCAS.

Under state law, there are no refusal options. Testing for grades 3-8 is done remotely, although some students may test in person in certain situations. Students who miss the test dates will be scheduled to take the test on a make up day. Grade 10 ELA and math and biology tests are administered in person. Testing is done in public sites such as libraries, hotels, and conference centers. Learning coaches are expected to provide transportation and to work with the MCAS team when there are issues with transportation.

GCVS also administers the Star 360 test during the school year. The purpose of this assessment is to identify students who may need additional academic support, and, at the end of the year, ensure that all students have grade-level math and reading skills. Students are required to take the Star 360 when it is administered, as the tests are part of the GCVS Accountability Plan that is filed with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Prior to testing, parents must log into their student's account and register their emails in order to receive results.

There is also a required writing test for elementary and middle school students.

*** A note about testing: Massachusetts public schools are measured by MCAS participation and performance. Low participation in the MCAS can hurt the state ranking of GCVS and can jeopardize the virtual school certificate of GCVS. For this reason, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) also mandates that we have all students take the Star 360 and the writing tests. GCVS needs all students to take these in order to meet the terms of our virtual school certificate.**

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)

GCVS teachers work to provide a stimulating and creative program for students in their classes. Occasionally, a teacher will see a pattern of learning difficulty emerge in a child that could indicate a need for added support. Teachers will refer students to the Multi Tiered System of Supports team (MTSS). MTSS offers targeted academic support based on analysis of the data collected through MCAS, other intervention based programs and overall student achievement. This program allows for more targeted support than is typically available.

The Family Engagement Team also works with teachers and families on ensuring that the student is appropriately engaged in classes by attending and participating in classes and completing assignment modules within Schoology. Occasionally, a teacher or other staff member will see a pattern of disengagement emerge in a student. Families will be referred for interventions by a member of the teaching staff, Family Engagement Team and Guidance Counselors to assist the student with getting reengaged before truancy procedures are put in place.

GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING STUDENT RECORDS

Cumulative Records Documentation

All cumulative records are documented electronically. One cumulative record is maintained for each child. All information pertinent to a child's progress should be included in such a record. Nicknames should not be used on official school records and/or lists. **In addition, no special education reports are to be placed in the student's cumulative record.**

Information regarding students is **confidential** and should never be discussed with anyone other than appropriate school personnel, caregivers, or legal guardians of students. If you are unsure of an individual's legal relationship to a child, contact a school secretary or an administrator before disclosing information.

Caregivers wishing to access their child's files may do so upon request through email or in written form. Records will be shared either electronically or by hard copy. Documents required by law may not be removed from the record. Caregivers may request copies of anything they find within the record.

Access to Student Records by Non-Custodial Parents

As required by M.G.L. c.71, s.34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

(a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:

1. The parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or
2. The parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or
3. The parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record.

(b) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school annually. The initial request must include the following:

1. A certified copy of the court order or judgment relative to the custody of the student that either indicates that the requesting parent is eligible to receive access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a), or a certified copy of a court order specifically ordering that the student records be made available to the non-custodial parent, and
2. An affidavit from the non-custodial parent that said court order or judgment remain in effect and that there is no temporary or permanent order restricting access to the custodial parent or any child in the custodial parent's custody.

(c) The non-custodial parent must submit a written request for access each year stating that said parent continues to be entitled to unsupervised visitation with the student and is eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(d) Upon receipt of the request (initial and annual) the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the school with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(e) The school must delete the address and telephone number of the student and custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial caregivers. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

(f) Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, s.34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

TITLE I

Title I is a Federal program that aims to ensure that all children in Massachusetts have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps by allocating federal funds for education programs and services. As a Title I school, GCVS receives funds to meet these goals that allow us to provide school-wide services, as well as targeted assistance to students who need extra help. Each fall, there will be a Title I meeting for parents and Learning Coaches to attend. Parents of students attending a Title I school

may request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teacher(s), which the school will provide in a timely manner. Families are also encouraged to review the school's Report Card.

K-5 INFORMATION

The Elementary School offers a comprehensive and exciting learning experience for students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Driven by the GCVS mission statement, the academic program seeks to prepare students for the challenges and complexities of an ever-changing world. The students in the Elementary School are provided the groundwork necessary for academic and personal success. The foundation skills of learning to read well, to write clearly, to reason soundly, and to speak effectively are stressed. The Elementary School emphasizes academic excellence, with a balance of enrichment opportunities and an emphasis on character development. The program provides a strong foundation for a child's total education in a rigorous yet supportive environment.

K-5 Grade Level Promotion

Promotion to the next grade level is determined by assessments designed within courses to measure student achievement. Students must have acquired the minimum amount of instructional time listed in the attendance policy. These goals should be discussed with the teacher on a regular basis. For students not meeting this standard, the final decision on retention is subject to the approval of the Principal.

Elementary School Grading Scales

Kindergarten – Grade 5:

Exceeding Expectations (grade averages of 96 to 100%)

Meeting Expectations (grade averages of 80 to 95%)

Developing/Partially Meeting Expectations (grade averages of 60-79%).

Not Meeting Expectations (grade averages of below 60%). Students who fall within this range will be considered at risk and referred to our support staff for appropriate support.

MIDDLE SCHOOL INFORMATION

The GCVS Middle School consists of grades 6-8. The middle school years are critical years in a child's development. Developmentally, they are going through changes, both physically and cognitively. The middle school team of teachers explore meaningful ways to challenge students' energy and intellect. Our middle school follows the traditional team model, where students are grouped into advisory groups with teams of teachers who collaborate to support both academic and social-emotional growth. Utilizing a high-quality instructional curriculum aligned with state standards to ensure consistency and rigor across content areas. By offering both a live and blended learning model, we provide students with structured guidance alongside increased autonomy. The blended program is in the pilot phase and is limited to teacher and administrative approval.

Middle school students have access to a discussion forum run by InScribe. This site is monitored

by the use of filters that look for trigger words and phrases, and by the Coordinator of SEL and Student Activities. Students are allowed to post and discuss topics with other GCVS Students in the same School section (EG, Middle School). GCVS takes the safety of its students very seriously, and any violation of safety and conduct expectations may result in the loss of InScribe privileges and/or further disciplinary action.

Middle School Grade Level Promotion

Promotion to the next grade level is determined by a passing grade of 60% or higher in the Core Curriculum (ELA, Math, History, and Science), Live Lesson and school attendance, teacher approval including verification of work submitted and other areas of accountability. Students must have acquired the minimum amount of instructional time as listed in the attendance policy. If a student was a late enrollee then the progress and attendance requirement is prorated. For students not meeting this standard, the final decision on retention is subject to the approval of the Principal.

Middle School Grading Scale

A+ = 97% - 100%	A = 93% - 96%	A- = 90% - 92%
B+ = 87% - 89%	B = 83% - 86%	B- = 80% - 82%
C+ = 77% - 79%	C = 73 - 76%	C- = 70% - 72%
D+ = 67 % - 69%	D = 63% - 66%	D- = 60% - 62%
F = Below 60%	INC = incomplete	

Middle School Honors

Students with a grade of all Bs or better in all classes will achieve the rank of Honors.

HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION

Requirements for Graduation

In Massachusetts, public school students must meet both local and state requirements in order to earn a high school diploma. For the state requirement, The Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993, G.L. c. 69, § 1D, requires that all students meet the Competency Determination (CD) standard.

State Requirement: Competency Determination (CD)

Students at GCVS who have previously earned a Competency Determination (CD) through a regular or retest administration of the MCAS (including the November 2024 retest) or through a DESE appeal process, have earned their Competency Determination (CD).

As of December 2024, students at GCVS who have not yet earned their Competency Determination (CD) through previous MCAS administrations can meet the requirements for a Competency Determination (CD) through **both of** the following:

- 1.) The **satisfactory completion of relevant coursework** aligned to the standards measured

by the high school English language arts, mathematics, and science MCAS assessments administered in 2023.

A grade of 60% or higher must be achieved in order to satisfactorily complete the relevant coursework in the following courses:

- English courses equivalent to English 9 and English 10 (or more advanced)*
- Mathematics courses of Algebra I and Geometry (or more advanced)
- At least one Science discipline (Biology, Introductory Physics, Chemistry, or Technology/Engineering)*
- United States History**

*To satisfy this requirement, the course must be taken in grades 9-12

**To satisfy this requirement, the course must be taken in grades 9-12. The U.S. History CD requirement will begin with the graduating class of 2027.

2.) **Showing a mastery** of skills in English language arts, mathematics, and science.

In order to show mastery in each of the named subject areas and in alignment with the High School grading scale, students must demonstrate a number of skills, competencies and knowledge as identified in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

- Skills, competencies and knowledge will be defined through learning objectives and performance expectations within course assignments and assessments.
- Skills, competencies and knowledge will be measured through a multifaceted approach using course assessments including but not limited to: summative assessments, course projects, discussion based assessments and formal written work. **Such assessments will be weighted more heavily as indicators and demonstration of mastery in relevant coursework.**
- Skills, competencies and knowledge will be tracked using the GCVS learning management system (LMS) Schoology.
- By achieving a passing score of 60% or higher in each of the named subject areas, a student is considered to have attained an appropriate level of mastery in order to meet the CD requirement at GCVS.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities Students with disabilities will be supported by members of the Student Services team, if the student has an IEP, or by members of the 504 team. If a student is not making progress toward competency, content and support staff will work with the student to provide the support needed to make progress. These supports may include scheduled academic support, progress monitoring, meeting with counselors, modifications to instruction and assessment, and the implementation of specific accommodations.

Considerations for English learners: Any student identified as an English Language Learner (ELL) and Former English Language Learner (FELL) will have the support of the ESL team to ensure equal opportunity to meet all CD requirements. If needed, students at the foundational

levels of English proficiency (i.e., Levels 1 and 2 on ACCESS) may have ESL courses that explicitly integrate grade-appropriate ELA standards with English Language Development (ELD) standards and which use instructional scaffolds that are appropriate to students' English proficiency levels.

Late Enrolling and Transfer Students: In order to evaluate the CD for late-enrolling or transfer students at GCVS, a thorough review of prior school records and transcripts will be required by the GCVS High School Guidance team. The review will include a determination of transfer of credits to ensure compliance with course length, relevant course work at prior schools, and demonstration of mastery based on prior schooling.

Late-enrolling students may be provided with alternative opportunities to take courses at GCVS to meet the CD including summer courses and credit recovery course options. In limited circumstances, a qualifying MCAS score-exception may be used by GCVS based on the individual situation of the student and their current academic path.

CD Appeal Process: In order to appeal the decision of GCVS to award a CD, a student and their parent or legal guardian must:

1. Submit a written appeal to the Principal of the High School. Appeals must be submitted within 10 school days of the parent or guardian being notified that their child has not met the CD.
2. The written appeal must include the justification for the appeal, a request for a transcript review and any other pertinent components.
3. Upon receipt of the appeal, a written decision from the Principal of the High School will be provided to the student and their parent or legal guardian within 5 school days.
4. If unsatisfied with the CD decision of the Principal of the High School, the student and parent/guardian have the right to request a final appeal to the GCVS Superintendent.
5. Any appeals must be adjudicated by GCVS.

Former Students: Former students who may be eligible for a GCVS diploma pursuant to the GCVS CD requirements, may request a review to determine their eligibility by emailing the Guidance Department at guidance@gcvs.org.

An eligible student is one who:

1. Was previously enrolled at GCVS
2. Previously met the local graduation requirements but did not receive a GCVS diploma because they did not earn a CD.
3. Was not previously reported as a graduate in any district's Student Information Management System (SIMS) submission.

Local Requirement: GCVS Graduation Requirements

GCVS generally follows the recommended Massachusetts High School Program of Studies (MassCore) for courses and credits to satisfy the local graduation requirement. MassCore is intended to help GCVS graduates arrive at post secondary opportunities well prepared. MassCore recommends a comprehensive set of subject area courses and units as well as other learning opportunities to complete before graduating from high school.

The MassCore information can be found [here](#).

1. Minimum credits: 22
2. Subjects Credits as follows:
 - English 4 credits
 - Math 4 credits
 - Science 3 credits
 - History 3 credits*
 - World Language 2 credits of the same World Language
 - Art, Music 1 credit in either Art or Music
 - Electives 3-5 credits
 - Physical Education** 2 credits

*History must include at least 1 year of World History and 1 year of U.S. History

**Physical Education must be taken each year of high school as required MGL Chapter 71, Section 3: *Physical education shall be taught as a required subject in all grades for all students in the public schools for the purpose of promoting the physical well-being of students.*

GCVS encourages students to pursue additional learning opportunities including dual enrollment courses, additional courses for college credit and work-based learning.

The GCVS Administration has the flexibility to decide whether students will be awarded high school credit for GCVS High School courses taken and/or accelerated through while in the GCVS Middle School. Such credits may be used toward early graduation at the discretion of the Head of School in accordance with the GCVS Early Graduation Policy.

High School Instruction

The GCVS High School Program offers different modalities of instruction as indicated below:

Class Type	Live	Asynchronous
Definition	Traditional class format. Students meet with their classes daily	Increased flexibility and independence. Students are not required to attend live lessons.
Attendance Requirements	Attend 4 live lessons per week for each class.	Students are not required to attend live lessons. Students have the option to attend office hours or set up appointments with teachers for extra help.

As part of a student's participation grade, High School students in GCVS Live are required to attend all live lessons. A student's participation grade may be up to 15% of the total class grade. Students who will miss their live lessons should notify the teacher prior to the beginning of the live lesson, communicate once they have reviewed the recording of the live lesson, and complete any work associated with the class.

High School Grade Level Promotion

On time graduation status is based on the number of credits a student has earned in a school year. Below is the number of credits to maintain on time (4 years) graduation status at each grade level. If these credits are not maintained, a student may not be promoted to the next grade level.

In order to be at this level:	A student must have this many credits
Sophomore	5.5
Junior	11
Senior	16.5
In order to graduate	22

Early Graduation

GCVS does maintain an early graduation policy approved by the Board of Trustees. Students who complete all graduation requirements early, may seek approval to leave school at that time provided they have complied with a number of procedures. Final approval is obtained from the Principal. Students should contact the Guidance Counselor if wishing to initiate the early graduation process.

High School Grading Scale

Grades are awarded at the end of each quarter. Each assignment, including quizzes, tests, and exams, is published with a point value, and the final grade is the percentage of the points earned divided by the points possible. Final grades are awarded at the end of the school year for full-year courses and at the end of the semester for half-year courses. The grading scale is as follows:

A+= 97 and over

A= 93-96

A-= 90-92

B+=87-89

B=83-86

B-=80-82

C+=77-79

C=73-76

C-=70-72

D+=67-69

D=63-66

D-=60-62

F=Below 60

Appeals

In the case of Academic, Disciplinary or other consequences a High School student may write an appeal letter to the Principal. The letter must be also signed by a caregiver. The student should state the nature of the appeal in the letter and explain the reason why the administration should consider the appeal.

GPA

Grade point average (GPA) is based on the student's letter grade in their courses. Core subjects (English, Math, Science, History, Geography, and World Language) are considered weighted

courses. The chart below illustrates the extra quality points given to honors and Advanced Placement courses.

GCVS GPS SCALE	Advanced Placement Course	Honors Course	College Preparation Course
A	5.00	4.50	4.00
A-	4.67	4.17	3.67
B+	4.33	3.83	3.33
B	4.00	3.50	3.00
B-	3.67	3.17	2.67
C+	3.33	2.83	2.33
C	3.00	2.50	2.00
C-	2.67	2.17	1.67
D+	2.33	1.83	1.33
D	2.00	1.50	1.00
D-	1.67	1.17	0.67
F	0.00	0.00	0.00

Honors, High Honors

High School Honors and High Honors are given at the end of semester one and at the end of the year. Students whose GPA is at least 3.0 with no more than one C in a given grading period will achieve the rank of Honors. Students earning a GPA of 3.33 or more with no more than one B will achieve the rank of High Honors.

Add/Drop Period

Students may add or drop courses through the tenth school day of the semester without penalty. After that date, students may petition the Guidance Counselor to add a course, who will confer with the Principal and Student Services team (in instances where a student may be receiving supplemental services) for a final decision. Students wishing to drop a course after the tenth school day will be guided by the withdrawal policy.

Withdrawing from a Course

Students are permitted to drop a course during the first two weeks of the course without penalty. Students should contact the Guidance Counselor if wishing to initiate the add/drop process. Students who wish to drop a course after the two-week period must contact their guidance counselor. Withdrawn courses will not be counted in a student's GPA calculations.

Students are advised to pay close attention to the Add/Drop dates for the course and to use the Withdrawal option only when necessary. Dropping a course may impact the ability to graduate in a four-year term.

Independent Study

GCVS students may participate in individually designed projects and studies that are worthy of high school credit. These projects may include course work at an accredited school or college, creative projects, academic research or other viable educational experiences. Each project proposal should have a distinct title, an outline of pursuits, measurable goals, and a final evaluation. A faculty advisor to monitor the project will be required, and interim assessments will be optimal. It is the sole responsibility of the student to develop, propose and document the learning objectives. Generally speaking, 0.5 credits will be awarded for approximately 90 hours of educational/creative pursuits. This is roughly equivalent to a single semester course. For successful completion of a project, elective credit on a pass basis will be granted. If a student wishes to receive a grade for independent study, that student must submit a formal proposal, which includes: a rationale for reason to receive a grade, the student's goals for the study, advisor objectives and specific learning activities and evaluation methods. This proposal must be approved by the Principal. Students should contact their Guidance Counselor for a proposal form, which is due not later than the tenth (10) day of the semester in which the project will take place. The project must be completed by the last day of assignments for that semester. Initial and final review by the Superintendent or designee is required.

Work-Based Learning

Experience in the world of work is valuable for eligible high school students, in compliance with the Massachusetts Child Labor Laws. Typically, these experiences will be limited to juniors and seniors, but other students may discuss the possibility of a proposal with the guidance department, the Coordinator of Student Support and the High School Principal.

A *Work-Based Learning Plan*, outlining the common competencies between school and work is available from the Coordinator of Student Support. Students will be required to have a job that entails between 10 and 20 hours of work per week (paid or unpaid), a work supervisor who is willing to evaluate their performance, and the Coordinator of Student Support who will make the final decision on whether there will be credit granted. Typically, a student may earn up to (1) credit per year; with a maximum of three (3) credits in a high school career for Work-Based Learning. The credits will be pass/fail elective credit. Each *Work-Based Learning Plan* must receive prior approval by the Coordinator of Student Support and the High School Principal. It is preferable that a student work no more than 20 hours per week.

GCVS will use the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) work-based learning program resource guide to implement and support the program. This will provide opportunities for students in grades 8-10 to explore workplace interests and understanding of valuable workplace skills.

Dual Enrollment

GCVS supports the participation of eligible high school students in dual enrollment programs,

subject to the availability of funds through the secondary institution. The intent of dual enrollment is to allow students the opportunity to take courses not available at GCVS and for students to explore and experience college coursework. Students, who are eligible according to GCVS guidelines below, may apply to these programs.

A qualified student at GCVS may enroll as a student in Massachusetts public institutions of higher education. A dual-enrolled student may earn both secondary school and college credits. Students may enroll as long as each of the conditions is met:

- A student must be in good academic standing, have attended GCVS for a full semester, and be a Massachusetts resident.
- Students considering dual enrollment or early admission programs, and any and all courses students enroll in, must receive prior approval by their guidance counselor and GCVS administration.
- Computerized Placement Tests are given at each of the community colleges and are used to determine readiness for all students. No student will be allowed to apply credit from a community college to GCVS for a non-credit bearing/remedial college course for high school graduation courses.
- Students participating in dual enrollment may earn credit(s) that meet requirements for high school graduation and higher education matriculation.
- Students must demonstrate the ability to benefit from college level work.
- All students will be required to have written approval from their caregivers/guardians, or a responsible adult in order to be accepted into a dual enrollment program.
- Continued eligibility will be determined based on the student's performance during the first semester.
- Students must meet all the necessary graduation requirements to earn a diploma.
- For students taking dual enrollment online classes with Greenfield Community College, the cost of tuition, fees, and books is covered.
- For students who choose to take dual enrollment classes at a different community college, no costs are covered.

Graduation Ceremony

GCVS graduation will be held at one location. To participate in the ceremony, students must have met all credit, district, and state graduation requirements. In addition, students currently under suspension will only be allowed to participate at the Principal's discretion. Family and friends of graduates are encouraged to attend graduation and related activities.

The last day of school for seniors will be 12 days prior to the last day of school for grades K-11 per Massachusetts law (603 CMR 27.05). Seniors who do not have a score of at least 60% in a required course at that point may be required to continue attending that course. This provides an additional opportunity for those students to learn the material and earn the credit they need to graduate.

EMPOWERED DIGITAL USE POLICY

This Empowered Digital Use Policy for the Greater Commonwealth Virtual School is enacted by the Board of Trustees to provide the Caregivers/Learning Coaches and students; and administration, faculty and staff of the GCVS School Community with a statement of purpose and

explanation of the use of technology within the GCVS learning community. This policy is reinforced by practice, acceptable use standards and is required to be read before accessing the technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure of GCVS. Students and Caregivers/Learning Coaches as well as all staff members of GCVS must also read and sign the accompanying Statement of Responsibility.

Purpose: The Board of Trustees recognizes the need for students to be prepared to contribute to and excel in a connected, global community. To that end, GCVS provides ongoing student instruction that develops digital citizenship skill sets for using technology as a tool. Information and communication technology are an integrated part of the curriculum across subjects and grades in developmentally appropriate ways and are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and standards, including seeking knowledge and understanding; thinking critically and solving problems; listening, communicating, and interacting effectively; and engaging and competing in a global environment

Availability: The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate the GCVS system/network for instructional and administrative purposes. All users shall acknowledge that they understand that using digital devices, whether personal or school owned, and the school network is a privilege and when using them in accordance with GCVS guidelines they will retain that privilege.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative guidelines, regulations, procedures, and user agreements, consistent with law and policy, which shall include but not be limited to the following:

- Digital devices, software, and networks shall be used in school for educational purposes and activities.
- An individual's personal information (including home/mobile phone numbers, mailing addresses, and passwords) and that of others shall be kept private.
- Individuals will show respect for themselves and others when using technology including social media.
- Users shall give acknowledgement to others for their ideas and work.
- Users shall report inappropriate use of technology immediately.

These procedures shall be reviewed annually by school administration together with students and teachers and shall provide a springboard for teaching and learning around topics such as internet safety, digital citizenship, and ethical use of technology.

Definitions: Technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure: defined as the GCVS school network, the Internet, Board of Trustees' approved curriculum providers, Google Apps for Education, email, school-issued hardware, software, printers, peripheral devices, individual computer devices, and web enabled devices.

“Information technology” is defined as Internet access, blogging, podcasting, email, published and unpublished documents, and various forms of multimedia technology.

“Educational use” is defined as a use that supports communication, research, and learning.

“Devices” refer to school owned/leased, staff owned devices used while on the school's

network, and parent/guardian/student owned devices while on the school's network.

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA): Congress enacted the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, 15 U.S.C. §6501, et seq. (COPPA) in 1998. COPPA required the Federal Trade Commission to issue and enforce regulations concerning children's online privacy. The Commission's original COPPA Rule became effective on April 21, 2000. The Commission issued an amended Rule on December 19, 2012 that became effective on July 1, 2013.

GCVS works diligently to comply with COPPA requirements. GCVS does not collect student personal information or transmit such information directly to online entities for the purpose of creating web based accounts other than the Board of Trustees' approved online curriculum provider(s).

Beginning in August of 2025, GCVS communicates to parents and legal guardians their right to opt-out of Additional Google Services and third party services as part of their GCVS educational program. As a virtual school, opting out of Additional Google Services and other third party providers may limit the educational experience of a student at GCVS. For example, students who cannot use Additional Google Services and other trusted third party providers may experience a disrupted work flow and missed opportunities for collaboration and engagement with peers.

Technology Related Services Provided by the GCVS: GCVS contracts with online curriculum content providers for their core programs. All providers must prove that they have the ability to be compliant with this policy as part of the contract with the school. Additionally, GCVS provides staff and may provide students with a Google Apps for Education account. Google Apps is a free web based suite of programs provided by Google for schools to use. All staff and students in the GCVS may have access to Google Apps for Education. Any student accounts set up by the GCVS will be created using only student local identification numbers.

General Email/Messaging and On-line Chat Guidelines: Email, messaging and chat boxes are to be used for school-related communication only.

The following are violations of expected GCVS on-line behavior:

- Harassing email messages or content
- Offensive email or messages or content
- Spam email or messages, content
- Email or messages containing a virus or other malicious content
- Sending or reading email or messages at inappropriate times, such as during class instruction
- Sending email or messages to share test answers or promote cheating in any way
- Using the account of another person

Content Filtering: GCVS uses software designed to block access to certain sites and filter content on any GCVS-issued devices as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. §254 (CIPA). GCVS is aware that not all inappropriate information can be filtered and the school will make an effort to correct any known gaps in the filtering of information without unduly inhibiting the educational use of age appropriate content by staff and students. Users will inform teachers and/or administrators of any inadvertent access to inappropriate material, in order

that there is appropriate modification of the filtering profile. GCVS educates students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking web sites and in chat rooms. GCVS provides these educational opportunities as part of the student orientation to the school for new students and annually for any returning students.

Monitoring: GCVS monitors the use of the school's equipment and network to protect the integrity and optimal operation of all computer and system networks. There is no expectation of privacy related to information stored and transmitted over GCVS network or via provided devices. The information on the network in general files and email is not private and is subject to review by the network manager at the request of GCVS administration to substantiate inappropriate activity and to comply with requests of law enforcement agencies as part of their investigations. GCVS will cooperate with copyright protection agencies investigating copyright infringement by users of the computer systems and network of GCVS.

Technicians and computer system administrators maintain full access rights to all storage devices, and may need to access/manage such storage devices as part of their duties. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the system may lead to discovery that a user has or is violating GCVS Technology Acceptable Use Policy, other Board of Trustees policies, state laws, or federal laws.

Searches of particular files of a user shall be conducted if there is a reasonable suspicion that a user has violated the law or GCVS Empowered Digital Use Policy. The investigation will be reasonable and in the context of the nature of the alleged policy violation.

Email and messages that are sent within GCVS are monitored and filtered based upon content. Rules/Filters will be set up to monitor student email for profanity, harassment, and other inappropriate content. Student email that is identified as inappropriate will be reviewed by the school administration.

User Access and Explanation of Guideline Access to information technology through GCVS is a privilege, not a right. Students, Caregivers/Learning Coaches, and staff shall be required to read the GCVS Technology Acceptable Use Policy and sign and return the Statement of Responsibilities.

This GCVS Empowered Digital Use Policy shall govern all use of school-owned technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure. Student use of technology resources, digital resources, web enabled devices, and network infrastructure will be governed by the GCVS Board of Trustees' disciplinary policies as outlined in the **Consequences for Violation of Technology Policies** section below.

Because information technology is constantly changing, not all circumstances can be anticipated or addressed in this policy. All users are expected to understand and comply with both the "letter" and the "spirit" of this policy and show good judgment in their use of these resources. GCVS provides students access to its technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure, along with information technology for educational use. If a student or parent/guardian has doubts regarding whether a resource has educational merit, he/she should ask a staff member.

Scope of Technology Policies: Policies, guidelines, and rules refer to all computing devices including but not limited to computers, mobile web enabled devices, tablets, MP3 players,

portable memory storage devices, calculators with interfacing capability, cell phones or ECDs (electronic communication devices), digital cameras, etc., as well as technology infrastructure, associated peripheral devices and/or software. Policies, guidelines, and rules refer to any computing or telecommunication devices owned by, leased by, in the possession of, or being used by students and/or staff that are operated on the grounds of the school facility or connected to any equipment at the school facility by means of web connection, direct connection, telephone line or other common carrier or any type of connection including both hardwired, fiber, infrared and/or wireless.

This Empowered Digital Use Policy also applies to any online service provided directly or indirectly by the district for student use, including but not limited to: online curriculum content providers and/or Google Apps for Education accounts, email, and calendar.

Expectation of Privacy: At any time and without prior notice, the GCVS reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review, and store all usage of school-owned technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure, along with information technology as well as any information sent or received in connection with this usage. Staff and students should not have any expectation of privacy regarding such materials.

Consequences for Violation of Technology Policies: Use of the computer network and Internet is an integral part of research and class work, but abuse of this technology can result in loss of privileges. Students and staff who use school-owned technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure, along with information technology inappropriately may face disciplinary or legal action. The nature of disciplinary action will be determined by administration and/or other staff members.

First Offense:

The student is made aware of the offense by the Principal and the caregivers are notified. The student will immediately remove any offensive content and demonstrate to the Principal that they understand and abide by this policy. In cases where the offense has targeted another student/staff member, a plan to make amends will be made and the student will implement the plan under appropriate staff supervision. This could also lead to an investigation of bullying or harassment.

Second Offense:

The student, the Caregiver/Learning Coach, and the Principal are made aware of the offense by the teacher and/or Technology Support Specialist. The student must have a meeting with the Caregiver/Learning Coach and their Principal. An agreement will be put in writing by the Principal clearly outlining expectations moving forward and potential consequences of further infractions.

Third Offense: The student, the Caregiver/Learning Coach, and the administration are made aware of the offense by the teacher and/or Technology Support Specialist. The student's access to GCVS systems will be suspended until the student and Learning Coach must have a meeting with the Principal to discuss the severity of this offense and possible further consequences. After successful completion of this meeting as deemed by administration, the student's access will be restored and they will be required to make up any missed work during the period of denied access.

Subsequent offenses:

Further violations of this policy may result in withdrawal from the school.

Unacceptable Uses of Technology Resources include but are not limited to the following:

- Interfering with the normal functioning of devices, computer systems, or computer networks. Damaging or theft of devices, computer systems, or computer networks.
- Accessing, modifying, or deleting files/data that do not belong to you. Sending or publishing offensive or harassing messages and content.
- Accessing dangerous information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or danger to others.
- Giving your username or password to any other staff member or student, or using the username or password of someone else to access any part of the system. Sharing and/or distribution of passwords or using another student or staff member's password. Intentional viewing, downloading or distribution of inappropriate and/or offensive materials.
- Gaining unauthorized access to computer and or telecommunications networks and resources.
- Viewing, transmitting or downloading pornographic, obscene, vulgar and/or indecent materials. Using obscene language, harassing, insulting or bullying others, posting of private or personal information about another person, spamming of the school email system, violating any federal or state law, local regulation or Board of Trustees policy.
- Violating copyright laws and/or the school policy on plagiarism.
- Copying software or applications from GCVS devices through any electronic means unless the licensing agreement in place for the software allows user distribution.
- Intentionally wasting limited network or bandwidth resources.
- Destruction/Vandalism of system software, applications, files or other network resources.
- Employing the network for commercial or political purposes.
- Using the network/Internet to buy or sell products.
- Hacking and other illegal activities in an attempt to gain unauthorized access to restricted files, other devices or computer systems.
- Uploading any harmful form of programming, bypassing filters; installing any type of server, aliasing/ spoofing, peer-to-peer networking or remote-control software.
- Possession of and/or distribution of any of software tools designed to facilitate any of the above actions will also be considered an offense.
- Saving inappropriate files to any part of the system, including but not limited to: Music files, movies, video games of all types, including ROMs and emulators.
- Offensive images or files programs which can be used for malicious purposes. Any files for which you do not have a legal license.
- Any file which is not needed for school purposes or a class assignment.
- Uses that contribute to the violation of any other student conduct code including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, hazing or harassment, theft, falsification of records, possession of banned substances/items, etc.
- Generating or transmitting AI-generated pornographic or AI offensive material.

NOTE: If you need a file for a class project that you think may be considered inappropriate, then you must have teacher and school administration permission to access the file prior to completing

the class project.

Due Process: GCVS will apply progressive discipline for violations of the school's policy and signed Acceptable Use Agreement Responsibilities Statement which will include appropriate disciplinary or legal action undertaken by GCVS administration.

GCVS Limitations of Liability: GCVS makes no warranties of any kind, implied or expressed, that the services and functions provided through GCVS technology devices, digital resources and network infrastructure, along with information technology will be error free or without defect. GCVS will not be responsible for damages users may suffer, including but not limited to loss of data or interruption of service. GCVS, along with any persons or organizations associated with the school's Internet connectivity, will not be liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the Internet through the school network infrastructure. All users shall assume full liability, legal, financial or otherwise for their actions while connected to the Internet. GCVS assumes no responsibility for any information or materials transferred or accessed from the Internet.

Caregivers/Guardians, students, and staff members should read this GCVS Technology Acceptable Use Policy. Caregivers/Guardians should discuss the technology use responsibilities with their children. Questions and concerns can be forwarded to GCVS's Senior Leadership Team. Caregivers/Guardians agree to accept financial responsibility for any expenses or damages incurred as a result of their student's inappropriate or illegal activities on GCVS devices or network. Caregivers and guardians agree to reimburse GCVS for any expenses or damages incurred in the use of district owned devices such as, but not limited to, laptops or tablets. Staff members also agree to these responsibilities. Modification: The GCVS Board of Trustees reserves the right to modify or change this policy and related implementation procedures at any time. Prior to implementation, staff, students, and caregivers/guardians will be notified of any changes.

Signatures: Caregivers/Learning Coaches, students, and staff members must read and sign the appropriate empowered digital use and school-issued technology agreements upon admission to or employment by GCVS. Returning families and staff members will sign new agreements at the beginning of each school year.

Signature forms will be made available to families separately. Failure to sign off on the Empowered Digital Use Policy and Device Acceptance may result in a loss of access to services until the sign off is received. Families are asked to be sure to sign off on these policies as well as this entire handbook within ten (10) days of receipt.

TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT

At the request of a family, a Chromebook/PC for school use ONLY will be issued. This computer is the property of GCVS and is on loan solely for this purpose. Families will be financially responsible for any damage to or loss of the computer.

If in the event the Chromebook/PC needs to be sent to the school for repair or is otherwise out of service, it is the family's responsibility to provide their student with access to the curriculum/classes until repairs or replacement device can be sent.

If a family leaves GCVS, GCVS provides computer Chromebook return instructions. GCVS does

not pay for international shipping and the family assumes the cost of return.

Computer peripherals, such as but not limited to external keyboards/mice, headphones, and printers are not issued to families unless the following conditions are met:

- The student has an IEP or Section 504 educational plan that dictates the use of these items. Absent a plan requiring these devices, a family may petition, through their Principal, to receive these devices.
- Eligibility for peripherals will be determined using the Free and Reduced lunch form submitted by the caregivers on an annual basis.
- If a family does not meet the income eligibility for these devices but has extraordinary circumstances, the Principal may make an exception.

GCVS SUPPORT CENTER

Located in Holyoke, the GCVS Support Center's primary role is to provide select GCVS students with access to academic, technical, and general school support services. GCVS staff are available to assist with virtual coursework, technology issues and resource navigation. The support center offers a structured environment where students can receive individualized assistance and guidance to support their educational progress at GCVS.

In addition, the GCVS Support Center offers a welcoming space designed to enhance learning, connection and well being. Staff may use the space for collaboration, professional development, or individual work. The GCVS Support Center bridges the gap between virtual and in person learning by providing a supportive environment that fosters community, engagement, and success.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS AT THE STUDENT SUPPORT CENTER

School Dress:

- When students are working at a GCVS student support center, they are to wear clothing and shoes that are neat, clean, and appropriate.
- All students are encouraged to use common sense when considering what to wear to school.
- All private body parts and undergarments are to remain covered.
- Any student whose dress causes a disruption to the instructional process will be addressed by teachers and the Coordinator of Student Support. Additional infractions may be referred to the Principal.

Best Practices for Learning:

- Students will have tabs open relevant to their GCVS courses
- Cell phones will be put away during class time
- Breaks can occur with permission from GCVS staff
- Students will be respectful to other students and staff in terms of noise and disruptive behavior
- Bullying, harassing behavior, use of illegal substances and other disrespectful behaviors will not be tolerated and will include immediate referral to the administration for disciplinary consequences

- Students will be good stewards of the support center. They will clean up after themselves and return materials (art, board games, learning supplies) to the appropriate areas.
- Students will be respectful of each other's personal property.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Since GCVS is a virtual school, the need to close school on days when other schools might be closed often does not apply. Teachers and students are expected to be in school as a normal workday. There may be extraordinary situations where GCVS might be closed (i.e., state of emergency, major power outage, etc.). The Superintendent may close the physical office, delay its opening, or dismiss office-based employees early in the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the health or safety of personnel. In these instances, certain personnel (administration or others deemed essential by the Superintendent) may be expected to work from home. An in person event may be canceled due to these circumstances.

The Superintendent has the responsibility to see that as much of the administrative, supervisory and operational activity is continued as may be possible.

In making the decision to close the office or cancel in-person events, the Superintendent will consider many factors, including the following relating to the fundamental concern for the safety and health of the children:

- Weather conditions, both existing and predicted.
- Driving, traffic, and parking conditions affecting public and private transportation facilities.
- Actual occurrence or imminent possibility of any emergency condition that would make operations difficult or dangerous.
- Inability of personnel to report for duty, which might result in inadequate supervision of students.

The Superintendent will act to close the school or cancel online activities only after consultation with appropriate agencies. Inasmuch as is possible, the Superintendent will make the decision by 6:00 am. However, extraordinary circumstances may cause that announcement to occur prior to or after that time. Notifications will be posted to the school's web site, announced through the school's social media feeds, and messages will be sent via the schools bulk messaging system and LMS.

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL OR SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS

The Board of Trustees is committed to providing a high quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment. No animal shall be brought to the school office or to a school sponsored event without prior permission of the Superintendent or designee.

School administrators, in consultation with the Health Services Providers at GCVS, shall utilize the Department of Public Health publication "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the Superintendent or designee shall be final.

Educational Program

Use of animals to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the administration provided student health and safety is not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to the "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and any other conditions established by the Principal to protect the health and well-being of students.

Student Health

The health and well-being of students is the highest priority of GCVS. Animals may cause an allergic reaction or otherwise impair the health of students. No animals may be brought to school or kept in the school, classroom, office or common area that may negatively impact the health of any student who must utilize that area. Animals that cause an allergic reaction or impair the health of students shall be removed from the school immediately so that no student shall have his/her health impaired and each student shall have full access to available educational opportunities.

Animals Prohibited from School

Rabies is a growing problem and any fur-bearing animal is susceptible to this very serious fatal disease. Infected animals can transmit this disease to students and staff. Based on the Massachusetts Departments of Health and Education recommendations the following animals are prohibited from the school office or school-sponsored events. Wild Animals and Domestic Stray Animals - Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and other wild carnivores, these animals should not be permitted in the school office or at any school-sponsored event under any circumstances (including dead animals).

Fur-Bearing Animals (pet dogs,* cats, wolf-hybrids, ferrets, etc.,) - These animals may pose a risk for transmitting rabies, as well as parasites, fleas, other diseases and injuries. Bats - Bats pose a high risk for transmitting rabies. Bat houses should not be installed on school grounds and bats should not be brought into the school building.

Poisonous Animals - Spiders, venomous insects and poisonous snakes, reptiles and lizards are prohibited for safety reasons.

Exception: Guide, Hearing and Other Service Dogs or Law Enforcement Dogs - These animals may be allowed in the school office or at school-sponsored events with proof of current rabies vaccination. Exceptions may be made with the prior approval of the Superintendent or designee.

Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)

The Board of Trustees does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. GCVS will comply with Massachusetts law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.

For purposes of this policy, a "service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability." The regulations further state that "a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse

has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability.” Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. There are several kinds of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, animals that: assist individuals who are blind or have severe sight impairments as "seeing eye dogs" or "guide dogs;" alert individuals with hearing impairments to sounds; pull wheelchairs or carry and pick-up items for individuals with mobility impairments; and assist mobility-impaired individuals with balance.

GCVS shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service animal or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or person having custody and control of the animal shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the service animal, including, but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc.

If, in the opinion of the Superintendent or authorized designee, any service animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the service animal may be excluded from the school office or program. The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school community. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the service animal from the school office or school- sponsored activity immediately.

If any student or staff member assigned to an area in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the person having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by the Superintendent or designee and an alternative plan will be developed with appropriate District staff. Such a plan could include the reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different location. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with GCVS and transportation staff including the involvement of the parents/guardian of the student.

When a student will be accompanied by a service animal in the school office or school-sponsored activities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student's parent or guardian, as well as the animal's owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the animal will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understood the foregoing.

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's or staff member's use of an assistance animal in the school office or at school-sponsored activities.

APPENDIX 1: 2026-2027 SCHOOL CALENDAR



Greater Commonwealth Virtual School 2026-2027 School Calendar: 180 School Days, 10 Professional Development Days

13,14,17,18 New Teacher Training

20,21,24,25 Staff Professional Development

26 First day of school grades K-12

Professional Development Days: 4

School Days: 4

AUGUST 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

FEBRUARY 2027						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

13-19 February Break

School Days: 13

7 Labor Day- No School

14 High School Open House ½ day high school students

30 Staff Professional Development-No school for students

Professional Development Days: 1

School Days: 20

SEPTEMBER 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

MARCH 2027						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

1 High School Evening Parent Conferences: ½ day for high school students
10 Elementary School Evening Parent Conferences: ½ day for elementary students
18 Middle School Evening Parent Conferences: ½ day for middle school students
19 Staff Professional Development-No school for students
Professional Development Days: 1
School Days: 22

1 Middle School Evening Parent Conferences: ½ day for middle school students

5 High School Evening Parent Conferences: ½ day for high school students

12 Indigenous Peoples Day-No School

30 End of Quarter 1 (43 days)

School Days: 21

OCTOBER 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

APRIL 2027						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

2 End of Quarter 3 (44 days)

19-23 Spring Break

School Days: 17

10 Staff Professional Development-No school for students

11 Veterans Day-No School

18 Elementary School Evening Parent Conferences: ½ day for elementary students

25-27 Thanksgiving Break

Professional Development Days: 1

School Days: 16

NOVEMBER 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

MAY 2027						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

31 Memorial Day-No School

27 Last day of classes for Seniors

School Days: 20

December 24-January 1st-Winter Break

DECEMBER 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JUNE 2027						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

8 K-8 "Step Up Night" ½ day for K-8 students

11 Graduation Day

14 Last day of school (43 days Quarter 4)

15-16 Staff Professional Development

Professional Development Days: 2

School Days: 10

18 M.L. King Day-No School

19 Staff Professional Development-No School for students

22 End of Quarter 2 (46 days)

Professional Development Days: 1

School Days: 18

JANUARY 2027						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Quarter 1: 43 days

Quarter 2: 46 days

Quarter 3: 44 days

Quarter 4: 43 days

Total=180 school days

Approved by the GCVS Board of Trustees 1/12/2026

APPENDIX 2: MASSACHUSETTS LAWS REGARDING SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

Please note that this law is to provide a reference to caregivers/guardians and students regarding disciplinary actions and their consequences, including due process rights. Offenses under this section may include weapons, which are forbidden to be carried in the school or at school-sponsored events (meet-ups, testing) and alcohol or banned substances, which are also forbidden in school or at school-sponsored events.

GENERAL LAWS OF MASSACHUSETTS: Part 1. ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT Title XII. EDUCATION Chapter 71. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

§71: 37H 3/4. Suspension and on grounds other than those set forth in Secs. 71:37H or 71:37H

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This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H 1/2.

Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or other person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall exercise discretion, consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and avoid using expulsion as a consequence until other remedies and consequences have been employed.

For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including caregivers in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student, provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing.

The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a

disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more. A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsions to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion provided, that a student or parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7-calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.

§71: 37H 1/2. Delinquency complaint against student; suspension; hearing; expulsion upon conviction:

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such a student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request of an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision of the city, town, or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and

reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such an expulsion, provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent. The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternative educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decisions shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.