

CODE OF CONDUCT

Policy Statement

The Gorham School Committee (“The Committee”) is committed to maintaining a safe, supportive, and orderly school environment. Students and staff will work together to experience a quality education without disruption or interference, in which students develop as ethical, responsible, and involved citizens who value themselves and others.

The Committee believes that each member of the school community should take responsibility for their behavior. To that end, the School Committee recognizes the need to outline what behavior students should strive for and refrain from.

Having considered the input of staff, parents, students and the community, the School Committee renews its commitment to our Code of Conduct (“Code”).

Community Core Values

With rights come responsibilities. School community members are expected to demonstrate ethical and responsible behavior consistent with its core values. Such conduct is fundamental to a supportive, safe, and orderly school environment and a civil society where all are valued.

The Gorham School Committee has established five core values.

RESPECT

A person who is **respectful** of oneself, others and the environment...

Strives to...	Refrains from...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate polite and acceptable words and interactions with others in-person and digitally. • Accept and appreciate individuals for who they are. • Treat everyone with dignity and courtesy. • Embrace both commonalities and differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflicting harm to self or others verbally, digitally, physically, or emotionally. • Causing damage to property, the community and the environment.

HONESTY

A person who is **honest** in all endeavors...

Strives to...	Refrains from...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accept ownership and responsibility for one's words, actions, and behavior.• Tell the truth.• Cultivate and foster trust in relationships.• Practice integrity in actions, work, and relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plagiarizing the work of others.• Engaging in deceptive behavior.• Blaming others• Taking the property of others.

COURAGE

A person who is **courageous** in the face of challenges

Strives to...	Refrains from...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stand up for what is right, even when it is difficult.• Persevere in the face of challenges.• Advocate for self and others by seeking advice when making difficult decisions or facing challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submitting to peer pressure.• Avoiding challenges.• Giving up when confronted by challenges.

COMPASSION

A person who displays **compassion** for themselves and others...

Strives to...	Refrains from...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead with kindness• Seek understanding• Show empathy by being sensitive to perspectives, needs and feelings.• Accept and include others.• Exhibit unselfish care and concern for all.• Reach out to those in need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hurting other's feelings.• Taking advantage of others.• Ignoring another's pain, suffering or needs.• Putting themselves down.

RESPONSIBILITY

A person who is **responsible** as an individual and as a member of a community

Strives to...	Refrains from...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take ownership of individual behavior and learning both in person and digitally.• Take initiative to do the things that are expected.• Demonstrate accountability for one's own behavior.• Follow through with commitments.• Protect the community and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Projecting blame on others.• Taking advantage of others.• Ignoring duties and commitments.

Behavioral Expectations and Discipline

This Code unifies the Gorham School Department's disciplinary policies, as cross-referenced below. Each school also has a student-parent handbook with detailed information about behavior expectations and discipline. The Code applies to students who are on school property, who are in attendance at school or any school-sponsored or school-related event, or while students are being transported to or from school or school-sponsored activities or events, or whose conduct at any time or place directly interferes with the student's academic performance or ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by the school.

The Gorham Schools hold high expectations for positive student conduct. In many cases, the School Committee has adopted policies and procedures that address these expectations in greater detail. Students, parents, and others should refer to the policies and student handbooks for more information about the expectations and consequences. In case of an inconsistency between the Code of Conduct, School Committee policies and/or school handbooks, the School Committee's policies will prevail.

The following areas have distinct policies and procedures that outline Gorham's expectations for student behaviors..

- Violence and Threats
- Weapons
- Bullying
- Hazing
- Discrimination and Harassment/Sexual Harassment
- Drug and Alcohol Use
- Tobacco Use
- Conduct on School Buses
- Computer/Internet Use
- Athletic/Extracurricular Activities

Violations of the Code of Conduct may result in restorative interventions and/or disciplinary action. School administrators have the discretion to tailor discipline to the facts and circumstances of the particular situation. Disciplinary consequences may range from a verbal warning for minor misconduct up to and including expulsion for the most serious offenses.

Referrals to Law Enforcement Authorities

The Superintendent and principals have the authority to seek the assistance of law enforcement authorities when there is a substantial threat to the safety of the schools, students or staff. The Superintendent/principals may also inform law enforcement authorities when they have reason to suspect that a student or staff member may have violated a local, state or federal statute. All serious offenses, as determined by the Superintendent, must be reported to law enforcement authorities.

Dissemination and Oversight of the Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct and summary of consequences for violation of the Code of Conduct shall be distributed to staff, students and parents through handbooks and/or other means selected by the Superintendent and building administrators. Additionally, the Superintendent shall be responsible for conducting a consistently-occurring review and maintaining oversight of this policy.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 254 (11); 1001 (15)
Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior in Maine Schools and Communities (Report of the Commission for Ethical and Responsible Behavior, 2/01)

The following cross-referenced policies contain more detail about specific expectations regarding appropriate behaviors and/or consequences for subsequent violations.

Cross Reference: AC - Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
ACAA/ACAA-R - Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
ACAAB - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
ACAD - Hazing
ADAA - School System Commitment to Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior
ADC – Use of and Possession of Tobacco and Electronic Smoking Devices
EBCC - Bomb Threats
IHBAA – Referral and Use of General Education Interventions
IHBAC - Child Find
IJNDB – Student Computer and Internet Use and Internet Safety
JICIA - Weapons, Violence, and School Safety
JICH - Drug and Alcohol Use by Students
JICK - Bullying
JK - Student Discipline
JKAA - Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion
JKD - Suspension of Students
JKE - Expulsion of Students
JKF - Disciplinary Removals of Students with Disabilities

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