

CODE OF CONDUCT

Policy Statement

The Gorham School Committee is committed to maintaining a supportive and orderly school environment in which students may receive and staff may deliver a quality education without disruption or interference and in which students may develop as ethical, responsible and involved citizens.

The School Committee believes that each member of the school community should take responsibility for his/her own behavior. To that end, the School Committee recognizes the need to model and teach ethical and responsible behavior, to define unacceptable student conduct and its consequences, and ensure that discipline is administered appropriately.

Having considered the input of staff, parents, students, and the community, the School Committee adopts this Code of Conduct (“Code”).

Community Core Values

With rights come responsibilities. Members of the school community 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.

The Gorham School Committee has established five core values.

RESPECT

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

Does Not...	Does...
Verbally abuse self or others.	Demonstrate polite and appropriate interactions with others.
Physically abuse self or others.	Value themselves and others.
Cause damage to property.	Care for surroundings.

HONESTY

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

Does Not...	Does...
Plagiarize the work of others.	Seek to tell the truth.
Engage in deceptive, blaming or sneaky behavior.	Accept ownership and responsibility for actions and work.
Take the property of others.	Maintain trust in all relationships.

COURAGE

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

Does Not...

Submit to peer pressure.
Avoid challenges.
Sacrifice aspirations when
confronted by setbacks.

Does...

Stand up for what is right, even
when it's unpopular.
Take appropriate risks.
Seek advice when making difficult
decisions.

COMPASSION

A person who is **compassionate**

Does Not...

Ignore another's pain, suffering or
needs.
Hurt others' feelings.
Take advantage of others.

Does...

Show empathy by being sensitive
to the perspectives, needs and
feelings of others.
Care about others and help them.
Reach out to those in need.

RESPONSIBILITY

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

Does Not...

Project blame on others.
Exploit others.
Ignore assumed duties or neglect
obligations.

Does...

Demonstrate accountability for
personal behavior.
Take initiative to do the things
that are expected.
Follow through with commitments.

Unacceptable Behavior and Consequences

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 unacceptable behaviors and consequences. The Code applies to students who are on school property, who are in attendance at school or at any school-sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any time or place directly interferes with the peace and usefulness of the school.

Unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

Behavior that puts the student or others in danger, such as –

- Violence
- Threatening or using a weapon
- Using or furnishing alcohol and other drugs

Behavior that fosters disrespect or a negative school climate, such as –

- Disrupting class or the school
- Harassment/Hazing
- Stealing
- Vandalizing
- Lying
- Using foul language

Behavior that has a negative impact on the student's or others' learning, such as –

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Class-cutting
- Unexcused absence or tardiness

Generally, the Gorham School Department uses the following range of consequences:

- Warning
- Classroom time-out or referral to the office
- Loss of Privilege (e.g. recess, transportation, co-curricular activities)
- Detention
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Removal of Disruptive/Violent/Threatening Students

Students who are disruptive, violent, or threatening death or bodily harm to others may be removed from classrooms, school buses, or other school property when necessary to maintain order and safety. The staff member who orders the student removed should arrange to have the student escorted to the office or other designated area.

If a student does not comply with a staff member's order to leave, the staff member will contact an administrator, or, if not available, another suitable person, who shall respond promptly.

Staff members should not use force or restraint, except only to the minimum extent necessary to protect any person from imminent physical harm. Staff members are not required to take action that puts them at risk of serious injury.

The responding administrator will take appropriate action. If the student fails to obey verbal directions, force or restraint may be used only to the minimum extent necessary to protect any person from imminent physical harm or to quell a disturbance. Whenever practicable, law enforcement should be called to restrain or physically remove the non-compliant student. The administrator may invoke the school department's crisis plan if appropriate.

If a student is restrained or physically removed the parent will be contacted as soon as practicable. The staff member on duty will submit a written description of the incident to the principal before leaving for the day.

Interventions to Promote Positive Behavior

Through the way the staff responds to unacceptable behavior and models, teaches, and responds to acceptable behavior, students will learn how to behave appropriately. Therefore, the following approaches to discipline will be used:

- Hearing each side of the story
- Seeking the support and involvement of parents
- Helping students resolve difficulties with each other through mediation or facilitation (except when a student feels unsafe)
- Implementing the principles of 'restorative justice' such as apology, restitution, and community service
- Assigning logical consequences

When intervening, the staff will consider the:

- Developmental level of the student
- Nature of the infraction including the harm done
- Student's prior behavior and disciplinary record
- Likelihood that the consequence would lead to an unreasonable or unjust result

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA Section 1001(15)

The following policies contain more detail about specific unacceptable behaviors and consequences.

ACAA	Harassment and Sexual Harassment
ACAD	Hazing
ADC	Tobacco Use and Possession
JICH	Drug and Alcohol Use by Students
JICIA	Weapons, Violence and School Safety
JIH	Questioning and Searches of Students
JKF	Disciplinary Removal of Students with Disabilities
JKF-R	Disciplinary Removal of Students with Disabilities - Procedures
EEAEC	Student Conduct on Buses
IJNDB	Student Computer Use and Internet
JK	Student Discipline
IHBA	Identification of Students with Disabilities
EBCC	Bomb Threat
AC	Nondiscrimination
JEB	Referral
JEC	Screening (Child Find)
KLG	Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities
KLG-R	Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities – Procedures
	Commitment to Learning
	Student/Parent Handbooks
	Athletic Code

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