



Welcome To Gwinnett County Public Schools

Welcome to Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS). Public Schools in the United States are free for all eligible students. The information in this booklet will help you understand the school system and requirements for your child. Please discuss the information with your family. Keep this booklet in a place where you can refer to it.

GENERAL INFORMATION

School Organization

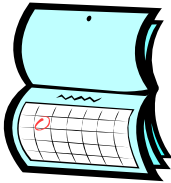
Elementary School (Grades K-5)

Middle School (Grades 6-8)

High School (Grades 9-12)

All children who are 5 years old by September 1 are eligible to begin kindergarten. Students who are 6 years old by September 1 are eligible for first grade. All children between the ages of 6 and 16 are required by state law to attend school.

School Calendar



The **GCPS Calendar** lists school days and school holidays. Most holidays are for all Gwinnett County public schools, but the local school selects some holidays. Please give careful attention to the starting and ending times of the school day, the dates of meetings, and the days when school is closed.

Attendance

It is important that your child attend school every day. It is the law.

Students should arrive on time and be in school the entire day. Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and has a negative impact on student achievement.

Students will be **excused** from school for the following reasons:

- Personal illness: Students who have a fever, throat infection or vomiting should not attend school. Students who have communicable diseases such as measles, mumps, head lice, and pink eye, should not attend.
- A serious illness or death in a student's family
- A court order
- Religious holidays
- When attendance is hazardous to student health or safety

Family vacations are not excused absences.

Leaving School Early “Check Out”

Sometimes students must leave school early. This should be done only for serious reasons such as doctor visits or court appearances. If your child needs to leave school early, you must come to the school Attendance Office. Parents must be able to present photo identification. Students may leave early only with persons you have listed on the school registration card.

School Closings

When there is snow, ice, or extremely cold temperatures in the early morning, parents should listen to public announcements on local and metro-Atlanta radio and television stations. Cancellation of a school day is usually announced at approximately 6:00 a.m. If bad weather begins during the school day, parents should listen to public announcements on the radio or television to learn of early school closings. Please do not call the school. When you register your child at the school, you may be asked to complete an “Inclement Weather” form that allows you to inform school officials of your plan for your child if school is dismissed early. (Will your child ride the bus as usual? Go to a neighbor’s home? Go to a daycare? Be picked up no later than 30 minutes after the announced closing time?)

Buses



Gwinnett County Public Schools buses provide free transportation to and from school. Your child's school can tell you the bus number, the location and the times for pick up and drop-off. For safety reasons, all rules must be strictly followed. Refer to *Bus Rider Rules* pamphlet.

Car Riders

Each school has rules for car riders to follow. The school will tell you the rules. Elementary school and middle school children may not be left at school earlier than the time established by the school for student arrival and may not be picked up later than the time established by the school.

Car Parking

If a car is parked in the bus lane or a "no parking" zone, the car will be towed or the driver will be given a fine.

School Lunch



Each school has a cafeteria. Your child may bring a lunch from home or may buy a school lunch. To buy school lunches, students may pay each day or you may buy in advance a weekly or monthly lunch card. Ask the school how to buy a lunch card. For families who meet certain low-income guidelines, lunch may be free or the price reduced. The child's school can provide the forms for you to complete. Sometimes your child may forget to bring lunch money or a lunch prepared at home. The school will provide a lunch for your child. This is called a “lunch charge.” Each school has rules for charging lunches. Please ask for these rules.

School Supplies



Your child will need pencils and writing paper. Some teachers ask students to bring special items. The teacher will give a list of supplies needed. The school may request a voluntary payment or donation for a special program or supplies.

Clinic Information Card

The Clinic Card must be completed each year for each student. School staff use the Clinic Card to contact parents in an emergency. Please write the telephone number of an English-speaking adult. When you have changes in your work/ home/cell/ beeper numbers, please advise the school. If the telephone number of your English speaking contact changes, please inform the school. On the card also list any medical conditions or allergies the student has, including allergies to food, bee stings, and medicines.

Medications



If a student needs to take medicine during the school day, the parent/legal guardian must write a note which includes 1) the date, 2) student's first and last name, 3) the name of the medication, 4) the dose and 5) the time to be administered, and 6) the reason for the medication. Medications must be in a bottle that cannot be opened by a child. If the medication is to be administered for more than one day, the parent or guardian must complete the *Administration of Medication Request Form*, which you may get from the clinic worker.

Emergency Drills

Gwinnett County schools practice safety drills. In a FIRE DRILL students learn how to walk out of the school building quietly and quickly with their teacher. Students return to class when the fire drill is finished. Georgia sometimes has tornadoes (rain storms with strong winds). In a TORNADO DRILL students learn where to go in the building and how to protect themselves by kneeling on the floor and covering their heads.

Field Trips or Class Trips

Sometimes students go on a class trip related to their academic learning. Teachers send home a permission form for parents to sign. If a parent does not want the child to go on the trip, the child will stay at school with a teacher. There may be a fee for the trip. If you cannot pay the fee, tell the teacher. The school may be able to make special arrangements. On the day of the trip, students ride together on a bus and return to school after the trip.

Discipline Policy

For the safety and security of its students, Gwinnett County Public Schools has a student conduct code. The student conduct code has been translated into several languages and is available in school offices. It is important that parents and students understand and follow these rules.

Student Dress Code

The school system has a dress code. The wearing of or absence of any item of clothes that could distract from the learning process of other students or with offensive words and/or design and/or the advertising of drugs or alcoholic beverages will not be tolerated. Some schools do not allow hats to be worn in the building. Students can learn more about their school's dress code in the student handbook or agenda book. It is important that students learn the rules.

Smoking



Smoking or tobacco use of any kind on campus or at school activities is absolutely prohibited. This rule applies to all persons, including students, staff, parents and other visitors.

PEOPLE AT THE SCHOOL WHO CAN HELP

Principal - Directs all the activities of the school. Handles serious problems that have not been resolved by the teacher or Assistant Principal.

Assistant Principal - Answers questions from parents about grades or school programs. Helps to solve student problems. Administers discipline.

Teacher - Instructs students. Communicates with parents about the student's achievement.

Counselor - Helps students with school and family problems. Students or parents may schedule appointments with the counselor. If needed, counselors may refer parents to community agencies for help. High school counselors offer academic and career counseling.

Registrar – Helps students enroll in school.

Secretary/Clerk – Helps students enroll, answers questions about school calendar schedules, manages school office and student records, answers telephone.

Clinic Worker - Gives out medicine provided by parents during school hours. Helps students who become sick during the day.

Equal Opportunity

The Gwinnett County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, race, color, disability, religion or national origin in the educational programs and activities or admissions to facilities operated by the Board or in the employment practices of the Board.

SCHOOL VOCABULARY FOR PARENTS

AKS Academic Knowledge and Skills. The AKS are the Board of Education's community-validated standards for excellence in academic knowledge and skills for students in Gwinnett County Public Schools.

Attendance Office The school office where students must check in if late or check out if leaving school early. Parents must sign their student in and out unless student is 18 years of age.

Conference A meeting with the teacher to discuss a student's academic progress or other issues. You may bring a translator.

ESOL English to Speakers of Other Languages. Special classes for students learning English which focus on the language skills those students need for academic success.

Gateway Tests The Gateway Assessment Program is adopted for the purpose of measuring and reporting student progress on the Gwinnett County core curriculum, the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS). Students enrolled in Gwinnett County Public Schools participate in the Gateway Assessment Program at specific grades. In grades where Gateway tests are administered, a passing score must be attained for promotion to the next grade level. ESOL students and students who have exited the ESOL program within the past twelve months are exempt from being required to pass the 4th, 5th, 7th and 8th grade Gateways. However, it is expected that they will take these Gateways for diagnostic purposes. Testing is also good preparation for the required high school Gateway, which is a graduation requirement for all students wishing a GCPS college preparatory and/or technical diploma.

Modifications Changes or deletions of AKS for students who are learning English. All LEP students are entitled to modifications according to GCPS policy on Promotion/Retention/Acceleration.

Permanent Records Report cards, health information and other documents the school maintains in files. You may request to see these.

PTA or PTSA Parent-Teacher Association or Parent-Teacher-Student Association. Parents and students are welcome to join PTSA. Parents are asked to attend meetings to learn about their school and are encouraged to volunteer to help at school.

Special Education Special instruction for students with handicapping conditions. Students are assessed for special needs prior to placement. Parents must attend meetings and consent to services before they are provided.

Waiver When a student is eligible for ESOL services but parents decline the service, the parent must sign a waiver. The waiver states that the parent agrees that the student is held accountable for meeting all grade level expectations regarding AKS and Gateway testing.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INFORMATION

Elementary School Progress Reports

Progress reports are sent home with students at the end of each nine-week period in a pre-printed progress report envelope. The parent must sign the report card envelope and return the signed envelope to the school within 5 days. The purpose of the progress report is to inform parents of their child's progress in achieving the GCPS Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS).

Grading for Students in Kindergarten/Readiness

Teachers complete progress reports to inform parents about their child's ongoing growth and development as defined by the AKS. The most widely used source of evaluation data is the teacher's observation of student learning.

Grading for Students in First Grade

Students in Grade 1 are assessed on progress toward the AKS by the following scale in academic areas, effort conduct, work habits, art, music, health, physical education and penmanship:

S+ Surpasses Standards	N Needs Improvement
S Satisfactory	U Unsatisfactory

Grading for Students in Second - Fifth Grades

Grades reporting progress toward AKS for academic subjects for grades 2-5 are reported using the following scale.

90 and above	A Excellent Progress
80-89	B Above Average Progress
74-79	C Average Progress
70-73	D Below Average Progress
Below 70	U Unsatisfactory Progress

Grades for special areas, effort, art, physical education, music, penmanship, health, conduct and work habits are reported using the following scale:

S+ Surpasses Standards	N Needs Improvement
S Satisfactory	U Unsatisfactory

Modifications

If the student is an English language learner, it may be necessary for instruction to be modified for the student's level of English proficiency. If the teacher is modifying the instruction in one or more subjects to help the student achieve, the report card grade will have a coded comment with one of the following messages:

"AKS Modified due to ESOL" or
"AKS Modified due to LEP"

In some cases, the student may miss a class while receiving English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction. In that situation, the report card will show the following message for the subject missed: *"Unable to assess due to ESOL."*

Parent Conferences/Early Release Days



It is important for teachers and parents to communicate to ensure students' educational achievement. If you have questions at any time, please write a note or call the school to schedule an appointment.

Two times each year (November and March) elementary and middle schools have special days for parent conferences. On these days, students leave school 2 ½ hours earlier than usual. (See *Early Release Days* on GCPS Calendar.)

The purpose of the conference is to review the student's overall progress in school. You may bring a translator if you wish.

MIDDLE SCHOOL INFORMATION

Middle School Reports and Grading Scale

Teachers prepare reports of the individual student's academic progress, as defined by the AKS, to the student, the parents or others who are concerned.

Progress Reports are issued following the end of four and one-half (4 1/2) weeks of each nine-week grading period. If a student's grades begin to drop after the four and one-half (4 1/2) week progress report is issued, the teacher must notify the parent or guardian by telephone or in writing as soon as possible before the end of the nine-week grading period.

At the end of every nine weeks, teachers send *Report Cards* home in preprinted report card envelopes. The student carries the report card home. The parent must sign the report card envelope and return the signed envelope to the school within 5 days.

For grades six, seven, and eight, student academic progress shall be reported by means of a numerical average according to the following scale:

90 and above	A	excellent progress
80-89	B	above average progress
74-79	C	average progress
70-73	D	below average progress
Below 70	F	unsatisfactory progress

The teacher of each class also assigns a Conduct and Effort grade to each student. The student's academic grade shall not be influenced by the conduct of the student nor by the effort demonstrated in class. Conduct and Effort shall be reported as follows:

E	Excellent
S	Satisfactory
N	Needs to Improve
U	Unsatisfactory

Modifications

If the student is in the process of learning English, it may be necessary for instruction to be modified for the student's level of English proficiency. If the teacher is modifying the instruction in one or more subjects to help the student achieve, the report card grade will have a coded comment with the following message:

“ ESOL Modified ”

Parent Conferences/Early Release Days



It is important for teachers and parents to communicate to ensure students' educational achievement. If you have questions at any time, please write a note or call the school to schedule an appointment. Two times each year (November and March) elementary and middle schools have special days for parent conferences. On these days, students leave school 2 ½ hours earlier than usual. (See *Early Release Days* on GCPS Calendar.) The purpose of the conference is to review the student's overall progress in school. You may bring a translator if you wish.

HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION

Grade Placement

Class or grade placement in grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 is based on the number of units a student has earned toward a high school diploma. **Initial grade placement will be reviewed when official transcripts are received and evaluated by the International Newcomer Center (INC) staff.** The number of credits the student has earned will determine final placement. Students must earn the following number of units for promotion to the next grade level. (Successful course work for one semester equals ½ unit or ½ credit.)

Grade/Status	Units Required for promotion
10th	5 units
11th	11 units
12th	16 units

Students who enter school after the 15th day of the semester will not earn course credits but will have “audit” status. As an auditing student, the student is expected to attend classes, participate in all class activities and assignments, and take tests and exams.

Students who enroll in school in the second semester can earn credits for one semester of the grade level. These students may need to continue in the same grade level the next school year in order to earn enough credits for promotion to the next grade level. Some students may choose to attend summer school to earn credits needed for graduation.

Note: Each school year has two (2) semesters. For every class a student passes in a semester, ½ credit is awarded. If a student fails a class, he must repeat only that class, not the entire year.

Transcripts

International high school students must have **official transcripts**/school records sent to the International Newcomer Center by the previous school. The transcripts must be for course work completed for grade 9 (or its equivalent) and above.

It is the family’s responsibility to request that the previous school(s) send official transcripts to the INC **within three months of enrollment**. The transcripts should include a grading scale for the school and an English translation of courses. The INC evaluates the transcripts only after **all high school transcripts** (grade 9 or higher) are received.

Graduation (Diploma) Requirements

Course Requirements



- 4 credits of English or language arts
 - 4 credits of math for college preparatory diploma, 3 credits for technical diploma
 - 3 credits of science
 - 3 credits of social studies
 - 2 credits of foreign language for college preparatory diploma or language proficiency in the native language
 - ½ credit of health
 - ½ credit of physical education
 - 1 credit of elective credits (fine arts, computers, etc.)
 - 3 courses in the same technical area for the technical diploma, 2 semesters in related area
- Total Units or Credits 22 (out of a possible 24)**

Examination Requirements



In addition to the course requirements listed above, students must also pass the following examinations to earn a diploma from Gwinnett County Public Schools.

- Georgia High School Graduation Tests in mathematics, science, social studies, English and writing.
- Gwinnett County Public Schools Gateway tests in world history, science and writing.

Grading Scale

Student performance is graded by means of an A, B, C, D, and F in relationship to the AKS for each course.

- A** An average of 90 and above in a course indicates excellent progress.
- B** An average of 80-89 in a course indicates above average progress.
- C** An average of 74-79 in a course indicates average progress.
- D** An average of 70-73 in a course indicates minimum acceptable progress.
- F** An average of 69 or below in a course indicates failure of acceptable progress.

High School Reports

Teachers give students progress reports in all six subjects at the end of the 6th and 12th week of each semester. Students take these progress reports to their parents. These progress reports tell parents of the progress their student is making toward the final semester grade. The final report card grade is given at the end of the eighteen-week semester.

For senior students who are candidates for graduation, the counselor will meet with the student before the end of the first semester of the senior year. An "Application for Graduation" letter will be completed and sent to the parents. This tells the student and the parents the student's progress or lack of progress toward graduation. Also, at least six weeks before the graduation date, parents of senior students will be told if the student may fail. The information will be sent in the 12th week progress report. If a student begins to fail in a class after the 12th week report, the teacher must notify the parents.

Parent-Teacher Conferences



It is important for teachers and parents to communicate to ensure students' educational achievement. Teacher - parent conferences may be requested at any time by teachers or parents. You may call the school or write a note if you wish to meet with your student's teachers. You may bring a translator if you wish.

Student Parking

Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege, not of right. Students must obtain a parking permit to park in the student parking lot. Students must learn the school's rules for student parking.