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Absences and Attendance

Regular attendance at school is very important for students to be successful. However, children who are ill or show symptoms of becoming ill should not come to school. Having them present when ill only lengthens their recovery time and exposes other students (see Health Department section for suggested guidelines on when to keep your child home).

It is the responsibility of parents to call the office if a child is sick or will be absent. A call will be made to the home or workplace if the office has not received a call by the time attendance has been taken. A 24-hour a day attendance line phone is available for each school.

When a child comes to school, he or she is expected to participate in all school activities including recesses and physical education, unless he or she has a note from the parent (one day) or health care provider (two or more consecutive days) indicating special circumstances for non-participation.

It is equally as important for children to be on time when coming to school. Please be sure your child arrives at school on time and ready to learn. This is very important for them and for other children in the class. The first few minutes of every day are crucial to children's learning.

GHAPS general guidelines for elementary attendance (absences or tardies) include the following:

- 5 absences or tardies – a letter will be sent home indicating absenteeism and emphasizing the importance of school attendance.
- 8 absences or tardies – a letter may be sent home to request a meeting with parents and school personnel to develop an Educational Plan/Report.
- 12 absences or tardies – unless a healthcare provider's documentation has been provided by parents, a truancy report and Education Plan / Report will be filed with the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD).

We reserve the right at any point in time to make a referral to the OAISD truancy officer.

Accident or Illness

Students who are injured or become ill while at school are brought to the office, where a determination is made as to what action is necessary. It is school practice that we attempt to call parents to inform them of any such situation unless it is a very minor one. Emergency contact information is used for this purpose, so it is very important that the office has current information for every child. Call the school office immediately if any change in the contact information occurs. Treatment of any injury or illness is the responsibility of the parents. (See Medication)

Animals or Pets

Animals or pets may be brought to school if accompanied by an adult, and the teacher has given prior approval. The animal or pet must be taken home after the class has had the opportunity to see it. We do not have space or facilities to keep an animal for any length of time during the school day.

Assessment / Testing

Classroom, district and State achievement tests are given to students throughout the school year. These assessments allow classroom teachers to identify students' strengths and areas needing further instruction. Classroom and district tests occur periodically throughout the year to help give a better understanding of each child's skills and abilities. Parents will be notified of the state testing schedule. If you have any questions regarding any of the tests, please call the school office.

Auxiliary Services

Grand Haven Area Public Schools offers many services and programs to support and enhance student learning. Following are some of the opportunities your child might be involved in:

Art – Students in Young 5's through the 5th grade have art every week. Children have the opportunity to experience many different art media during the school year.

Music –A music teacher meets with Young 5's through 4th grade students each week. The intent of the vocal music program is to increase the students' overall appreciation and development of skills in music. Fifth grade students are eligible to participate in the band program, choir is a part of the general music program for 5th graders, and 4th and 5th graders demonstrating a desire to play a string instrument can participate in the orchestra program.

Library/Media – A district Media Specialist works with teachers and students in the elementary schools to enhance library skills, utilize resources, and assist students with presentations and research.

Physical Education – All students receive physical education instruction each week. Additional times may be held with the classroom teacher. To provide your child with the best opportunity to participate safely and successfully, **he/she must wear soft-soled gym shoes while** in the gym.

Reading Specialist – A Reading Specialist works with teachers and students to improve the level of reading performance for all students.

School Psychologist and Social Workers – Children with educational or behavioral issues may be referred for support. A School Psychologist/Social Workers is assigned to each building for teacher in-service, conferences, observations, testing, etc.

Speech and Language Therapist – Provides diagnostic evaluation and preventive/treatment services for children exhibiting such communication disorders as articulation, language, stuttering, cleft palate, and hearing difficulties.

Teacher Consultant for the Physically Impaired – A teacher works with all physically impaired children who are eligible in the district. OT/PT teachers also serve students with occupational or physical needs.

Bicycles

Students must be in the third grade or above to ride bikes to school. Students who are eligible to ride to school are expected to follow good safety practices including:

- Walking bikes across corners where safety patrollers are on duty
- Parking bikes in the bike rack
- Walking bike on school property
- No riding bikes around the school or on the playground during school hours
- Helmets and locks are encouraged

Bus Rules

Students must:

1. Be at assigned bus stop on time.
2. Not litter on the school bus.
3. Stay off the roadway: maintain proper conduct while waiting for leaving a school bus.
4. Get on and off at the designated stop. Changes must be approved in writing by a school authority.
5. Not talk in a loud voice or shout or create any other disturbing noises.
6. Remain seated. The driver is authorized to assign seats.
7. Not eat or drink on the school bus without permission of the bus driver or teacher or chaperone.
8. Not use profane or vulgar language, or make obscene gestures.
9. Cross in front of the bus, not in back.
10. Keep head and hands inside the bus.
11. Not throw objects on the bus or out of the window of the bus.
12. Obey instructions of and show respect to the driver.
13. Not harass others or otherwise be unruly.
14. Not fight.
15. Not spit or bite.
16. Not damage or vandalize the school bus. Students will be required to pay for repair of damage.
17. Not possess or use flammable or explosive devices on the bus.
18. Not possess or use illegal/dangerous substances/items on the bus.
19. Not possess or use tobacco products on the bus.

Child Services Program

Preschool Program

The Grand Haven Area Public Schools' Preschool Program is designed to meet each child's individual needs and help them reach their full potential as learners. Our centers are designed to address the developmental needs of young children by recognizing each child as a whole person: physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs are all part of our curriculum.

School-Year Open Door & Prime Time

Open Door is a licensed childcare program designed to meet the needs of all children ages 2½ through 5th grade. Hours are from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Prime Time is an extension of our Open Door program and is developed for children 2½ years through kindergarten. Children learn and socialize with other children to create a positive feeling about school. Children aged 2½ who are not potty trained may attend our Central location only.

Summer Open Door

Summer Open Door is a childcare program open to children who are 2½ through 7th grade in the fall. The Summer Open Door program site is at Central High School. Quality childcare is provided from 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. The Summer Open Door program is designed to be a fun learning experience.

Extended School Program - E.S.P. Classes

E.S.P. Classes offer children the advantage to explore many different areas of their world. Some of the classes offered include: Babysitting Class, Art Classes, Special Preschool Classes, Cooking Classes, and more.

For more information or to enroll your child in the Child Services Program, call 616-850-6825 or visit <http://www.ghaps.org/childservices>.

Child Study Teams

When a student is in need of additional support to be successful in school, they are referred to the Child Study Team. The team might include the speech/language therapist, resource room teacher, reading specialist, psychologist, social worker, and principal. The team will meet with the teacher to develop a plan to help ensure the child will succeed in school. The child's parents may also be invited.

Communication for Divorced Parents

The school staff will communicate with parents to help children succeed in school. In the case of children of divorced parents, the law stipulates that the custodial parent alone has the responsibility for custody, care, control, and education of the children. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents shall have access to their child's educational records. FERPA regulations presume equal access for both parents, unless there is a court order or legal documentation to the contrary.

In the event of a request for access to a child's records or to a parent-teacher conference from a non-custodial parent, it shall be the procedure of the principal or principal's designee to inform the custodial parent that the school will grant access unless the custodial parent produces the required document within seven (7) days of the date of the notice. Please call your child's school office to request information.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. These are designed to be a two-way exchange so both parent and teacher will know and understand each child better, therefore being able to most effectively plan his or her program. Some teachers offer student-led conferences in place of traditional conferences. In this case, the child will be attending the conference with you. At both fall and spring conferences, two or three evenings are set-aside for parents who cannot attend during the day. Due to the large number of conferences each teacher schedules, we ask that divorced/separated parents attend the same conference.

Curriculum

In core subject areas specific curriculum programs are established. These are aligned with State of Michigan standards. The detailed curriculum for each grade level is available on the district website at <http://www.ghaps.org/academics/gradelevel.htm>, with the information available from the school. The staff will be happy to discuss in detail any of the curriculum areas with parents. If you have questions or need additional information, please call the school office for an appointment.

Drugs/Alcohol/Weapons

Any student who intentionally sells, gives, possesses, uses or is under the influence of illicit drugs, narcotics, or alcohol in or on school property, including buses, shall be (1) expelled from school and (2) reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies for possible legal action. Parents, students and staff must take the issue of weapons and illegal behavior at school very seriously. If students are caught with a weapon as defined in either state or federal law or commit serious acts such as arson or rape, they will be expelled. Recently both the federal and state governments enacted laws requiring local school boards to implement policies requiring expulsion of students who bring weapons to school. Policy 5145.6 Student Code of Conduct is available at <http://www.ghaps.org/boardpolicy.htm>. See page 26 for *GHAPS Weapons Policy*.

Emergency Information

A Student Profile sheet will be available for each student at the beginning of the school year. This profile includes contact information for your student. Please review this information carefully, make any necessary changes/additions, be sure all of the information is complete and return the form to the school immediately. This information is kept on file at school. If there are changes to this information during the school year, please contact the office immediately.



Field Trips

A field trip is defined as an educational experience outside of the classroom or school building, involving the use of facilities other than school-owned. Parents will have an opportunity to volunteer as chaperones if they have completed the state of Michigan background check. Information/forms available at: <http://www.ghaps.org/elemforms.htm>. Chaperones are responsible for supervision of groups of students and, therefore, **are asked not to bring along other siblings**.

Students are expected to ride to and from the field trip on the bus. Special requests for different travel arrangements must be submitted in writing and approved by the principal 24 hours prior to the field trip.

A blanket permission form is available at <http://www.ghaps.org/elemforms.htm> or will be distributed at the beginning of the school year. This must be signed and returned to the school before a child will be allowed to go on a field trip. Children on a field trip represent their school, parents, and community; therefore, their attitude and behavior is very important.

Fire, Tornado, and Safety Drill Procedures

To help insure the safety of all students in the school we conduct regular practice drills in case of fire, severe weather, or other emergencies. These drills are very important and students must take them very seriously. Teachers will instruct their students in the procedures.

Lunch Program



The Food Service Department is committed to provide a healthy and nutritious lunch to students. All students are eligible to participate in the lunch program. Menus and Lunch Preference Requests are distributed each month from your school or can be printed from the GHAPS website. (www.ghaps.org)

Breakfast Program

The Food Service Department is pleased to provide a breakfast program that is open to all students in participating schools. Breakfast is served from 8:15 – 8:50. Breakfast selections change daily, menus are available from the school office or on the GHAPS website. (www.ghaps.org). Please check with your child's school to see if breakfast is offered.

Payments

Meals may be paid for by the month, week or day. No more than two lunches may be charged for the year. During the last two weeks of school, charging of lunches will not be permitted. Please put payments in a sealed envelope with your child's name. Payments can be made by check, cash, money order or online. Checks or Money Orders should be made out to GHAPS and can only be deposited for the entire amount; no change will be given to students. There is a \$15.00 service fee on all returned checks.

Computerized POS System

GHAPS has a district wide computerized Point of Sale system that provides more accuracy in accounting for student's balances and lunch choices. The Meal Magic System, enables parents to view or print out their child's account history. When you send a payment for your child's lunch or milk, it will show as a dollar amount of credit and not a specific type of credit (i.e., lunch or milk). When your child eats lunch, the dollar amount will be deducted from their account balance, similar to a debit card. Your school will notify you when your child's account balance falls below \$6.00 so you may replenish the account. You can view account information and make deposits online. Visit www.sendmoneytoschool.com to get started.

Negative Balances

A student whose account is in the negative will have a reminder note sent home to the parent. Students whose accounts continue to be in the negative will not receive their menu selection; instead they will be served a cold sandwich and milk at a cost of \$1.40 until the balance is paid in full.

Positive Balances

Positive Food Service account balances at the end of the school year will automatically be applied to your child's meals for the next school year.

Meal Benefits

Through the National School Lunch Program, your child may be eligible for free or reduced meals at school. You may apply at any time during the school year. This benefit is based solely on household income. Applications are available from the Food Service Department, the school office, or on the GHAPS website. (www.ghaps.org/foodservice) You may also apply online at www.lunchapp.com.

Sack Lunches

Sack lunches are available for purchase from the Food Service Department for your child's field trips. Meal benefit students may receive sack lunches at their current benefit rate. All lunches must be ordered 48 hours in advance and can be deducted from your child's pre-paid balance or paid on that date. Request forms are available through the school office, your child's teacher or on the GHAPS website. (www.ghaps.org)

Snow Days

When school is cancelled due to inclement weather, the meal that was scheduled to be served on the snow day will be served on return day of school. Check the Food Service website for the latest information.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, please notify your school and the Food Service Department. We must have a note from your child's doctor each year to verify the allergy. Information is available to be reviewed in our office containing the ingredients we use in our menu items. Please contact the Food Service Department at 850-6080 if you would like to set up an appointment to review this information.

Fund-Raising

Many extra programs, activities, and equipment that provide excellent opportunities for students require the raising of extra funds. The principal must approve all fund-raisers. The board of education encourages a limit on fund-raising activities each year.



Harassment

It is the policy of Grand Haven Area Public Schools to clearly prohibit harassment of any type. School board policy delineates definitions, right of confidentiality, reporting procedures, and penalties. Reports of harassment of any kind will be investigated and appropriate measures taken according to the policy and procedures of the school district. Policy 5145.6 Student Code of Conduct is available at <http://www.ghaps.org/boardpolicy.htm>.

Health Department Information

The following information from the Ottawa County Health Department is included as a guideline to be followed until your doctor is contacted.

- **Fever** – A fever is a warning that all is not well with the body. No child with a fever over 100 should be sent to school. Do not allow a child to return to school until he/she has been free of fever for 24 hours.
- **Common Cold** – A child with a heavy cold or a hacking cough belongs home in bed, even if there is not fever.
- **Sore Throat** – A child with a slight sore throat and no other symptoms may go to school. If there is difficulty in swallowing, redness or white spots in the throat, call your doctor.
- **Rash** – A rash may be the first sign of one of many childhood illnesses. Do not send a child with a rash or spots to school until your doctor has said it is safe.
- **Fifth Disease** - Fifth disease is a mild rash illness that occurs most commonly in children. The ill child typically has a "slapped-cheek" rash on the face and a lacy red rash on the trunk and limbs. The child is usually not very ill, and the rash resolves in 7 to 10 days. By the time a child has the rash he or she is probably no longer contagious and may return to school.
- **Stomachache, Cramps, Vomiting, Diarrhea** – Any child complaining of these symptoms should be kept home.
- **Toothache** – Contact your dentist
- **Earache** – Contact your doctor.
- **Headache** – A child with a slight headache usually need not be kept home. If the headache is severe, especially accompanied by other symptoms, he/she should be kept at home and your doctor contacted.



- **Head lice** – Head lice are very common parasitic insects found on the heads of people. If a child is determined to have head lice he/she should not come to school until they have been treated and are nit-free.
- **Pink Eye** – Students will be sent home if Pink Eye is suspected. They should be evaluated by a physician and be on medication at least 24 hours before they return to school

Sick children belong at home – well children belong in school.

Homework

It is generally our belief that homework should be an extension of the regular school program and a responsibility that the student undertakes independently, whether at home or outside of class periods at school. When students have work to do at home, parents can help by providing a time and a place for children to work. It is acceptable for parents to answer questions the children have, but the child should do the work.

Immunization Requirements

All immunization requirement information is available from the Ottawa County Health Department at www.ottawahealth.org and complete immunization information from the Center for Disease Control is available at <http://www.mioottawa.org/HealthComm/Health/Imms.htm#immunize>

Inclement Weather

The decision to go outside during inclement weather is often difficult. The wind chill and precipitation are used to make this decision. It is school practice to have the students outside, even for a brief period if at all possible. Daily fresh air and exercise are important for students to do their best work. Parents can help by making sure their child comes to school properly dressed for the weather.

It is occasionally necessary for the students to remain indoors at recess and/or the noon hour. During inclement weather, games are provided in each individual classroom, or students may have other options. When this occurs at recess time, the teachers assigned to recess duty will monitor the students in each classroom while they are engaged in quiet activities and during lunch hour the supervisor will monitor children.

Lost and Found

Sometimes a child loses something – a coat, mitten, shoes, or hat. A lost and found area is provided for lost clothing and equipment. Valuables (watches, rings, money, etc.) are turned in at the office. Parents can help by clearly marking clothing and other personal items.

Lunch Room Expectations

While lunch hour should be a time to relax and visit with friends, it is also important that certain rules are followed for the health, safety and well being of all students. The following rules are in effect for our lunchroom:

- Students are to behave in an orderly manner. Shouting and excessively loud talking are inappropriate.
- Students are to walk to their seats and stay seated until they have finished eating. Running in the lunchroom is not permitted.
- Students who have an accident or spill food should help the noon hour supervisor clean it up. Throwing of food or wrappers is not acceptable.
- Empty trays, bags, milk cartons, etc. are to be deposited in the proper containers. Food wrappers, papers, etc. may not leave the eating area.
- After finishing eating and cleaning up, students are to go directly outside, or in case of inclement weather, back to their classrooms.
- Students should bring their coats to the lunchroom with them. They are **not** required to wear them while eating.
- Students who consistently do not abide by these rules will lose the privilege of participating in the lunch program. (See section on Student Conduct)

Medication

In certain situations it is necessary for school personnel to administer medication to a student. District Policy 5142.1, based on state law, determines how medication can be distributed.

- Students are not allowed to carry any medication during school hours. This includes: cough drops, Tylenol, eye drops, etc. All medication must be kept in the office.

- A request for the school to administer any medication during the school day must be submitted in writing by a parent or guardian. Forms for this are available in the school office. This includes medication prescribed by a doctor and any other medication such as Tylenol, cough syrup, inhalants, etc.
- All medication must be in the original container and must include the prescription information.
- An adult must bring all medication to the office so its administration can be properly monitored and accounted for. Since medications can have adverse effects if someone received them for whom they weren't intended, transporting them with students on the bus is prohibited for everyone's safety.
- School District policy requires that we count and keep accurate records of the number of pills we receive and administer. When dropping off medication, please plan a few extra minutes for this to occur.
- By law, the school cannot provide medication of any kind. Thus, parents must provide even the simplest medication such as Tylenol.

Parent Involvement

Grand Haven Area Public Schools welcomes and encourages parental involvement in a variety of educational experiences.

When Parents Should Get Involved

- The earlier in a child's educational process parent involvement begins, the more powerful the effects. The benefits of parent involvement are not confined to early childhood or the elementary grades, but last through high school.

Impact on Student Achievement

Decades of research show that when parents are involved students have:

- Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates
- Better school attendance
- Increased motivation, better self-esteem
- Lower rates of suspension
- Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
- Fewer instances of violent behavior



- Eighty-six percent (86%) of the general public believes that support from parents is the most important way to improve the schools.
- Lack of parental involvement is the biggest problem facing public schools.
- Family participation in education was *twice* as predictive of students' academic success as family socioeconomic status. Some of the more intensive programs had effects that were *10 times* greater than other factors.
- The more intensely parents are involved, the more beneficial the achievement effects.

The more parents participate in schooling, in a sustained way, at every level -- in advocacy, decision-making and oversight roles, as fund-raisers and boosters, as volunteers and paraprofessionals, and as home teachers -- the better for student achievement.

Parents are encouraged to participate in advocacy, decision-making and oversight roles at GHAPS. Please contact your building principals to participate in the following opportunities.

- Development of the Title I planning process through the building or district School Improvement Team.
- Coordination of technical assistance and other support for schools such as reviewing grade level brochures and the parent information section on our district website.
- Coordination and integration of parental opportunities with other programs such as Headstart through our Early Childhood Advisory Team.
- Actions to conduct annual evaluation of parental involvement through the review of our annual parent survey and the results of that survey.
- Involvement in school activities through school committees and contribution of specialized or community-related skills.
- Building school capacity for parental involvement to improve academic achievement by planning parenting sessions with the assistance of our Ottawa Area Intermediate School District, development of parent tips for our website, and education of parents on State's academic content standards.

Photos and Videos

On occasion, students will have photos or video taken while they are at school. These images are often used in promotional materials for the school district. The photos might be used in Spotlight, on the district website, in brochures or publications, or on GHTV. If you do not wish to have your child photographed, you must notify the school office.

PTA

Parents are encouraged to get involved with the building PTA. The PTA sponsors many activities during the year to support the education of the children and provides many classroom resources.

Recreation

Northwest Ottawa Recreation Authority is a cooperative effort sponsored by the City of Grand Haven, Grand Haven Township, Grand Haven Area Public Schools, City of Ferrysburg, and Robinson Township to provide quality recreation and leisure activities for our community. The program is administered by the Grand Haven Area Public Schools. Program schedules are published regularly in a brochure that is available in the office, in Spotlight, on GHTV, or on the district website. Programs will often be highlighted in flyers sent home with students. For more information on programs available, call 850-5125.

Release of Information

The board of education has determined through Policy 5125 that "Directory Information" may be released, without prior consent, to individuals, groups, or organizations whose interests and purposes are to advance legitimate educationally related aims and objectives as determined by school officials.

"Directory Information" may include: student name, address, publicly listed telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight, and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, most recent previous educational institution attended and other similar information including names, addresses and telephone numbers of students' parents.

Religious Instruction

By state law students are permitted to attend religious education classes at their church or synagogue during the school day. Written parental consent to release a student for a program of this nature is necessary. Students are responsible for work missed while they are gone.

Report Cards

Students receive three report cards per school year at the end of each marking period.

Riding With Strangers

All students should be reminded NOT to accept rides with strangers. This would be unwise and the risk involved is far too great. The school should be notified whenever other than regular transportation has been arranged for children. No child will be permitted to leave with anyone who is not on record with the school without prior notification from the parent.

Safety Patrol/Service Club

Safety Patrols are selected from students in the upper grades. These students provide very important assistance for students coming to school. Please impress upon your child the necessity of obeying the safety patrols. Students involved in Service Club help in the library and computer lab before and after school, and help younger children during noon hours and bus times.



School Hours

Grades 1 st – 5 th	8:53 a.m. to 3:52 p.m.
Morning Kindergarten	8:53 a.m. – 12 noon
Afternoon Kindergarten	12:40–3:52 p.m.



Students may not enter the building before the bell rings in the morning without permission. During inclement weather students may go to a designated location in the school. Parents should not drop their children off at school until supervision is available after 8:30 a.m. As a general rule, the closer students arrive to the 8:53 a.m. starting time, the better.

School Telephone

The school office telephone is to be used by the students in case of an emergency only. Any after-school activity should be prearranged before school begins. Each classroom has a phone for staff/parent communications. Messages can be left for staff on their voice mail during "instructional" time.

Snowballs

Throwing of snowballs at school or on the way to or from school is not permitted. State Statute MSA 28.626 states that any person who throws any stone or other missile (snowball) at an automobile, train, etc. shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. This policy is for the protection and safety of all students. Please review the policy with your children frequently during the winter months. The procedure for dealing with violations of the rule is:

- First Offense – student is sent to the principal's office, where a record of the offense will be kept and the student is warned about snowballing.
- Second Offense – Student will be sent to the principal's office, where he/she will take a letter home explaining to parents the violation. The letter will be signed by the parents and returned to school the next day. The student will also lose some recess privileges.
- Third Offense – The parents of the student will be contacted by the school to discuss the student's suspension for one school day.



Snow Days/Emergency Closings

When the possibility of school cancellation exists, parents are asked to listen to Grand Haven radio station WGHN 92.1, watch Channel 8 or 13, call the school closing line (850-5100), or check the district website at www.ghaps.org. Information will be available on these sources as early as possible.

On rare occasions school must be dismissed early due to poor weather conditions. If you “think” school might be dismissed before normal dismissal time because of weather, please tune in to WGHN, call the school closing line (850-5100), or check the district website at www.ghaps.org. Please talk with your child regarding what your plan is if an early school closing should occur. If you are not at home please make arrangements for your child go to a neighbor’s or friend’s home.

Student Code of Conduct

The Grand Haven Area Public Schools’ Board of Education policy 5145.6 Student Code of Conduct - Rights and Responsibilities in the Grand Haven Area Public Schools, pertains to the importance of creating and maintaining an environment in our schools conducive to the learning process. The Code also stresses instilling respect for individuals, their property, and their rights in all of the Grand Haven Area Public Schools while at school related events, on school property, including buses, and also along school routes to and from school.

This Code defines student conduct that is considered prohibitive and includes types of misbehavior that are accepted by parents as to be generally disruptive to the learning process. Of special note are state and federal requirements prohibiting student possession, use, sale or distribution of electronic communication devices and also mandatory expulsion for possession of weapons or for the commission of arson or sexual misconduct on school property.

Further outlined in the Code is the process and procedure used by the schools to enforce the Code. Discipline for conduct considered prohibited under the Code of Conduct includes exclusion of the student from a classroom or activity for a period of time, all the way to mandatory expulsion for at least a year for the most serious offenses.

Policy 5145.6 Student Code of Conduct is available at:
<http://www.ghaps.org/boardpolicy.htm>.

Student Conduct

Rules and expectations pertaining to student conduct on the playground, in the classroom, lunchroom, and other areas of the school are necessary to maintain a harmonious school environment that promotes the proper values, attitudes, and practices necessary for a good educational climate. These rules are based on, and part of, a general philosophy of mutual respect between school personnel and students, keeping in mind the students’ rights and safety, and the school’s responsibilities.

With this in mind, the following three general statements, along with common sense, provide the basis for all of our school rules:

- Students should not violate the rights of others;
- Students should not engage in activities that are dangerous to themselves or others;
- Students should respect the property of the school and of all individuals who comprise the school community.

These three general statements give rise to the following, more specific rules, which everyone is expected to follow:

1. Students are to obey the teachers and other school district personnel. They are there for each student’s well being and should be treated with courtesy and respect.
2. Play must be confined to the playground. Leaving the school grounds is strictly forbidden.
3. Fighting, hitting, pushing, tripping, teasing and name-calling are not permitted.
4. The use of profanity and obscene language is prohibited.
5. Throwing things such as stones, sticks, sand, snowballs, pine cones etc. is not allowed.
6. Tackle football, King of the Mountain, chicken fighting, and other similar games are not permitted.

7. Skateboards are not allowed; roller blades are permitted only at designated times and locations. Whether or not students roller blade to school is a parental decision. However, upon arrival at school students are to remove them immediately.
8. All playground equipment is to be used properly and safely and in the appropriate areas.
9. WEAPONS – State and Federal law mandates serious consequences for students who bring weapons to school - even for elementary pupils. Note the section under Weapons for an explanation of the law.

Incidents of student behavior requiring discipline, whether in school, on the playground, or on the bus, will be treated similarly. Offenses will be cumulative no matter the location.

Student Dress

Students are expected to keep themselves well groomed and neatly dressed at all times. Any form of dress that is considered contrary to good hygiene or that is distracting or disruptive in appearance and detrimental to the purpose or conduct of the school will not be permitted.

Students Leaving School During the Day

A sign-out sheet in the office is used when children are picked up by parents (or other designated adult) during school hours. You must report to the office before your child will be dismissed from his/her classroom. All outside doors except the front entrance are kept locked during the school day for safety purposes.

Suspension From School

If a student is suspended from school, he/she will be afforded minimal due process protections, including oral or written notice of the accusation(s), what disciplinary measures are being proposed, and an opportunity to respond. If feasible, the notice and hearing will precede the student's removal from school. If the student's presence poses a danger to persons or property or threatens to disrupt the academic process, prior notice and hearing may not be feasible. In this case, a hearing will follow the student's removal from school as soon as possible.

Technology Code of Ethics

With support from our community, the Grand Haven Area Public Schools are pleased to offer access to state-of-the-art technology. The available hardware, software, network, and Internet access provide students and employees excellent opportunities for learning and working. Access to the Internet enables users to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards throughout the world.



Families should understand that some material accessible via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. While our intent is to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages. But ultimately, parents and guardians of minors have the right and responsibility for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Therefore, the Grand Haven Area Public Schools support and respect each family's right to decide whether or not to allow their child access to the Internet.

The Technology Code of Ethics clearly defines appropriate student behavior for use with technology at GHAPS. Additional rules and regulations may be posted in district classrooms. Students violating any of these expectations may face loss of access, restitution and/or other disciplinary or legal action according to the parameters established by the individual building or district.

The use of technology at Grand Haven Area Public Schools is a privilege extended to students to enhance learning and exchange information. Users have the opportunity to utilize district technology and access the Internet for learning. Therefore, it is the expectation that all users will adhere to the following guidelines:



- Act responsibly during use of hardware, software, printers, labs, and networks in the district.
- Maintain the privacy of passwords and network security.
- Be responsible for personal network storage.
- Understand any information stored on the district network is the property of the school district.
- Comply with all copyright laws while using district technology.
- Refrain from downloading or installing programs, changing software or hardware configurations, or using district technology for any unauthorized purpose.
- Abstain from using chat programs, telnet, and other forms of personal communications except email.
- Follow specific rules and regulations posted in individual district buildings or classrooms.

Individuals using technology will adhere to all of the rules, regulations, and standards of Grand Haven Area Public Schools. Users violating any of these expectations will face disciplinary action according to the parameters established by the district.

Transportation



Riding the school bus is a privilege. School buses are operated for your convenience and safety. Rules of conduct have been established to maintain the safety of students and to create a positive environment in which everyone is treated with respect. Following is a brief summary of policies that regulate transportation services in the district:

1. Items taken on the bus must be enclosed in a tote bag or backpack and placed on the student's lap. Bags, containers, or personal items brought on the school bus are subject to inspection by the driver to ensure they do not pose a safety problem during transit. Drivers have the right to confiscate items that are dangerous, illegal, or are creating an unsafe environment. Skateboards, roller blades, baseball bats, science projects, fund raising boxes, and balloons are some specific items not allowed on buses. Even though they may be allowed at school, they must be transported by some other means.

2. Requesting to ride a bus other than the assigned bus:
 - a) All requests for change must be in writing, signed by parent/guardian, and approved by the principal or school secretary.
 - b) The address must be on any existing bus route.
 - c) Adequate seating must be available to approve the change.
 - d) Students who do not have a bus pass from the school office will not be allowed to ride a different bus OR get off at a different stop. This is a school district policy to ensure your child's safety and well-being.
3. Pre-school siblings are not allowed to go on field trips.
4. A student may be required to walk up to one mile to school or their bus stop.
 - a) 5.A student may have up to two different bus stops, one of which would be home and the other a consistent day care location. The day care location must be within the school attended boundary area.
5. Buses do not travel down private drives, dead-end streets, or most cul-de-sacs.
6. Parents are responsible for the safety and conduct of their children while walking to their designated bus stop, waiting at the bus stop, and walking home from their bus stop.
7. Buses do not follow an exact time schedule due to traffic, weather, and road conditions. Students are to be at their assigned stop five minutes prior to the designated pick-up time. Buses do not stop at bus stop locations when no students are present.

A complete copy of the rules for student conduct on the bus may be obtained from any school, from the Transportation Department, or posted on the district website at www.ghaps.org. Bus drivers may award points for infractions of the stated rules. The number of points determines the length of a student's suspension from riding the bus. Points are cumulative during the year. If a student accumulates 20 points during the year, they will lose the privilege of riding the bus for the remainder of the school year. When a misconduct slip is given to a student, they will be given two copies. One copy is for the parent to retain, and one copy must be signed by the parent and returned to the driver on the day bus riding privileges resume.



Visitors

School personnel are anxious to share the building and programs with others. Parents and guests may make an appointment to observe or review programs with staff. Arrangements should be made through the office. All visitors must sign in and out at the school office.

Student visitors from other schools are welcome after regular school hours. The visits should be scheduled through the principal and classroom teacher.

Volunteers in School

When parents are involved in their child's education, students tend to do better in school. They realize you value education and their success is important to you. We hope that with the variety of volunteer opportunities available in our school there is something that will fit into your schedule. Please do not hesitate to call the school office if you have questions or would like additional information.

Volunteers are needed for a variety of events, activities, and tasks at our schools. Some needs are one-time events (field trips, cutting letters, stapling, assembling, etc.); others are on a regular basis (daily, twice a week, weekly, etc.). This might include working in a classroom assisting a student or helping with an event planned by the PTA. If you have a few minutes or a few hours, we can use your help!

The safety of students in Grand Haven Area Public Schools is our number one priority. To help insure that safety, the GHAPS conducts a records check on all individuals volunteering in our schools. If you intend to volunteer in our school or plan to volunteer in the future, you must complete the Volunteer Assessment Form and return it to the school office immediately. This includes people working in any capacity in the school - in the classroom, office, field trips, chaperoning parties, etc.



Technology is now available to the school district, through the Michigan State Police, to do background checks on individuals. To help insure there are no concerns with individuals who come in contact with students in our school, a criminal background check will be done on any person volunteering. People volunteering in school will complete the Volunteer Assessment Form, including name, address and birth date. The form is available at:

<http://www.ghaps.org/elemforms.htm> or in the school office. This information will be submitted to the Michigan State Police ICHAT (Internet Criminal History Access Tool) program for review. Results will be completely confidential.

If you currently volunteer in our school or if you think you might volunteer in the future, please complete a form and return it to the office. This includes people who volunteer in any aspect of school life: in the classroom, the office, go on field trips, chaperon parties, etc.

Weapons Policy

Student safety is of utmost the importance in the Grand Haven Area Public Schools. Therefore, the Board of Education has adopted a policy in line with both state and federal laws requiring zero tolerance of weapons on school property.

The law and school board policy are both very clear regarding zero tolerance for weapons in GHAPS. Parents and students should know federal and state law, as well as GHAPS School Board Policy, calls for the expulsion from school of a student who possesses a weapon on school property.

Michigan law requires the expulsion of any student who possesses "a dangerous weapon" defined as a firearm, dagger, dirk, stiletto, knife with a blade over three inches in length, pocket knife opened by a mechanical device, iron bar, or brass knuckles on school property. The penalty for violating the zero tolerance laws and policy is a one-year expulsion for student in 6-12th grades and up to a 90 day expulsion for a kindergarten through 5th grade child.

If you have any questions about a circumstance where your child might need or want to bring any item to school that could be considered a weapon, call the school. Know the law and talk with your child about serious consequences of violating the weapons policy. Complete policy available at: <http://www.ghaps.org/boardpolicy.htm>.