K-12

GILMER COUNTY SCHOOLS

Student-Parent Handbook

2023-2024

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GILMER COUNTY SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

Gilmer County Schools
Administration & Technology Office
134 Industrial Blvd
Ellijay, GA 30540
Office (706)276-5000
Fax (706) 276-5005
www.gilmerschools.com

Dr. Brian Ridley
Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS
The Gilmer County Board of Education meets at least once per month at the Gilmer County Schools Administrative & Technology Office (ATO) located at 134 Industrial Blvd, Ellijay. A calendar of School Board meeting dates may be obtained by contacting the ATO at (706) 276-5000 or online at www.gilmerschools.com. All meetings of the Board of Education are held in public.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Doug Pritchett, Chair
District 3
doug.pritchett@gilmerschools.com

Michael Parks, Vice Chair
District 1
michael.parks@gilmerschools.com

Joe Pflueger
District 2
jpflueger@gilmerschools.com

Michael Bramlett
District 4
michael.bramlett@gilmerschools.com

Jake Callihan
District 5
Jacob.callihan@gilmerschools.com

GILMER COUNTY SCHOOLS | 2023-2024 CALENDAR *(REVISED 2/16/2023)*

JULY 2023

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					

7/28 – New Employee Orientation

7/31-8/3 Pre-Planning

AUGUST 2023

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		

7/31-8/3 Pre-Planning

8/4-First Day of School

20 School Days

SEPTEMBER 2023

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

9/4-Labor Day Holiday

20 School Days

OCTOBER 2023

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				

10/4-10/6 -Fall Break

10/11-End 1st Nine Weeks

10/13-Report Cards

19 School Days

NOVEMBER 2023

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		

11/20-11/24-Thanksgiving Holiday

17 School Days

DECEMBER 2023

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						

12/19-12/20-Exam Schedule (Early Release)

12/20-End 2nd Nine Weeks

12/21-1/2-Holiday Break

14 School Days

JANUARY 2024

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			

1/3-4-Professional Learning Days

1/5-First Day of School

1/9-Report Cards

1/15-MLK Holiday

18 School Days

FEBRUARY 2024

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		

2/21-2/23-Winter Break/Inclement Weather Days

18 School Days

MARCH 2024

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						

3/13-End 3rd Nine Weeks

3/14-Professional Learning Day

3/15-Inclimate Weather Day/Teacher Work Day

3/19-Report Cards

19 School Days

APRIL 2024

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				

4/1-4/5-SPRING BREAK

17 School Days

MAY 2024

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	

5/23-5/24-Exam Schedule (Early Release)

5/24-End 4thNine Weeks/Last Day

Graduation TBA

5/27-Memorial Day
5/28-5/29-Post Planning

18 School Days

JUNE 2024

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						

	No School – weekends and summer		Professional Learning/Work Day (No School for Students)
	First Day/Last Day of School		School Holiday (subject to change and/or cancellation)
	Final Exam Schedule-Early Release		

GILMER COUNTY SCHOOLS

Clear Creek Elementary School (K-5)
901 Clear Creek School Drive
Ellijay, GA 30536
(706) 276-5010
Stephanie Burnette, Principal

Start Time	Dismissal/End Time
8:00 am	3:05 pm

Mountain View Elementary School(K-5)
350 Calvin Jackson Blvd.
Ellijay, GA 30540
(706) 276-5100
Charles Walker, Principal

Start Time	Dismissal/End Time
8:00 am	3:05 pm

Clear Creek Middle School (6-8)
346 Clear Creek School Drive
Ellijay, GA 30536
(706) 276-5150
Sarah West, Principal

Start Time	Dismissal/End Time
7:45 am	3:00 pm

Gilmer College and Career Academy
Larry Walker Education Center
1860 South Main Street
Ellijay, GA 30540
(706) 276-5030
Carla Foley, CEO

Hours of Operation	
Open 7:30 am	Close 2:30 pm

Ellijay Elementary School (K-5)
32 McCutchen Street
Ellijay, GA 30540
(706) 276-5020
Melinda Fonteboa, Principal

Start Time	Dismissal/End Time
8:00 am	3:05 pm

Gilmer County Pre-Kindergarten
(Located at Ellijay Elementary Annex)
(706) 276-5014
Katrina Kingsley, Director

Start Time	Dismissal/End Time
8:00 am	2:30 pm

Gilmer High School (9-12)
408 Bobcat Trail
Ellijay, GA 30540
(706) 276-5080
Derek Bowen, Principal

Start Time	Dismissal/End Time
7:30 am	2:30 pm

Mountain Innovation Program
1860 South Main Street
Ellijay, GA 30540
(706) 276-5007
James Jones, Director

Start Time	Dismissal/End Time
7:30 am	2:35 pm

SCHOOL WEBSITES

Each school within the school system has an individual school website. Valuable information about academic progress, school news, contact information, upcoming school events, and a variety of timely, useful information can be accessed at each of these sites. These websites can be accessed through the school system's website at **www.gilmerschools.com.**

PARENT NOTIFICATIONS / GENERAL NOTICES

WEAPONS PROHIBITED

In keeping with the Gilmer County School System's priority of providing a safe and secure environment for teaching and learning, and except as permitted by the Official Code of Georgia O.C.G,A. 16-11-127.1, it is unlawful for any parent/legal guardian, or visitor **with exception of law enforcement and other public safety officials acting in their official capacity**, to possess, carry or have within their control any weapon, or explosive compound as defined by Georgia law O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1 in ,or on any property owned by or leased to the school system, including but not limited to, a school building, administrative or support facility, any school function or activity, on school buses or school vehicles.

Persons who are licensed in accordance with Georgia law O.C.G.A. 16-11-129 or issued a permit pursuant to O.C.G.A. 43-38-10 may possess any weapon **legally kept within a vehicle and under the person's control** when such vehicle is used to carry or pick up a student at a school building, school function, or school property, is in transit through a designated school zone, or is parked at such school property.

INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION

If inclement weather is approaching our area and it becomes necessary to cancel school/close school early, the announcement will be made on Metropolitan Atlanta television stations, as well as on radio station WLJA 101.1 FM. Additionally, school closings will be posted on the school district's website @ www.gilmerschools.com, announced by automated telephone calls, text alerts and will also be posted on the school system's Facebook page.

RULES FOR BUS TRANSPORTATION AND STUDENT DRIVERS DURING SEVERE WEATHER

- TORNADO WATCH: Principal will make decision on when to release students.
- TORNADO WARNING: Principal will not release buses and student drivers until the warning is lifted or the superintendent or his designee gives permission.
- THUNDERSTORMS: Principal will make decision on when to release students.

PARENT NOTIFICATIONS IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY

The school system endeavors to notify parents in a timely manner relative to any school wide or System wide emergency or campus safety concerns. While notifications will be sent to parents impacted by the occurrence within one school day of any such event, circumstances may require a more immediate notification—in any such situation, notifications and up-to-date information will be posted on the school system's website at www.gilmerschools.com or through automated phone calls, text alerts and the System's Facebook, as applicable.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Orderly evacuation of the classroom is necessary in the event of an emergency. Students should familiarize themselves with appropriate evacuation routes. During emergency evacuations, students are to remain quiet and follow the evacuation route posted as well as the instructions of the teachers. Emergency procedures should be taken seriously - It could save your life!!

Student behavior will consist of *NO TALKING OR PLAYING* during an emergency situation and/or drill!

NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE, SCHOOL SYSTEM/SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS AND WEB SITES

Events and programs in public education are often considered newsworthy and of interest to local communities. Schools often solicit media coverage to publicize successful programs and special events concerning students and faculty. Your child may on occasion be interviewed or photographed by the news media for positive school news coverage. Additionally, your child's image or intellectual property may be included in a school system or school publication/webpage. If a parent/guardian objects to his/her child being included in any or all of the above, he/she must annually notify the principal in writing within 10 days of receipt of this handbook, or within one week of admission/enrollment.

CAMPUS HOURS

Students who are not under the direct supervision of a teacher should not be on the school campus more than thirty minutes before the tardy bell in the morning nor remain on the campus more than thirty minutes after the last class bell at the end of the school day. Students dropped off early or left late will not be supervised.

VISITOR/SCHOOL GUEST SIGN-IN PROCEDURES

Georgia law requires that visitors, with the exception of students, school system employees, and law enforcement officers/other public safety officials in the performance of an emergency call, sign-in at the front office during the official start and dismissal times and to provide a reason for their presence at the school. All visitors are required to wear proper ID and remain in the areas designated for the visit. The principal or designee shall have the authority to ask any visitor to explain their presence in the school at any time when the school is in session. Any person who does not have legitimate cause to be on the premises or on school property or who fails to sign-in at the designated location may be in violation of Georgia law and upon investigation may face criminal prosecution.

GUIDELINES FOR CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS BY PARENTS / LEGAL GUARDIANS

On those occasional instances where parental observation in the classroom is deemed appropriate, the following guidelines shall be strictly adhered to in order that the visit not interfere with the instructional process, nor violate privacy rights of other students in the classroom.

- Observer must be a parent or a legal guardian of the child in the class to be observed. A request for observation shall be approved in advance by the principal.
- Scheduling shall take place at least twenty-four hours prior to the visit and must be done with the consent of both principal and teacher. The principal or designee will notify the parent.
- If two-way mirrors or closed-circuit television is available, observation must be done via that method.
- Maximum observation time shall be one period or 45 minutes, whichever is more appropriate to the school's schedule.
- Observations will be limited to one per semester per child.
- Under no circumstances is there to be any interaction between the observer and anyone in the classroom.
- Use of cell phones or electronic devices to record audio, video, or still photography during classroom observation is strictly prohibited.
- Exception to this policy must be granted by the Superintendent of Schools or a designee in response to the specific request.

Note: Parental requests submitted to principals for observations to be conducted as part of private evaluations (IEEs) must be forwarded to the Special Education department.

SECURITY AND PRIVACY REGARDING CAMERA PHONES/CAMERAS/RECORDERS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Gilmer County Schools will not be responsible for electronic devices (iPods, cell phones, iPads, MP3 players, etc.) owned by, and brought to school by students. Responsibility to keep privately owned devices secure rests with the individual owner. Neither Gilmer County Schools, nor its staff or employees are liable for any device stolen or damaged on campus. Personal devices that are reported as stolen, lost or damaged while in the care of the student will be treated as any other personal item (such as coats, purses, books, gym bags, shoes, etc.). The school may initiate protocols that promote safety and security (e.g., lock cabinets, lock doors to classrooms and desk drawers where items may be secured). Additionally, the possession or use of camera phones, cameras, recorders, or other electronic devices that might violate the privacy rights of students and/or school staff, used to commit academic fraud or jeopardize the health, welfare or safety of students, staff, public safety officials and others during a school emergency or crisis will result in appropriate consequences.

ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE

Gilmer County Schools recognizes that the unlawful possession and use of illicit drugs and alcohol is illegal and harmful and Gilmer County Schools will neither approve nor promote this practice.

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE

School Accident Insurance is offered through the school system to students. Several insurance plans are available to provide protection against medical expenses resulting from accidental injury to your child. Enrollment materials are available upon request.

MANDATED REPORTERS

Georgia Law requires persons in some professions to report suspected abuse and/or neglect. They are called "mandated reporters". Mandated reporters are required to report abuse if that person attends to a child, as a member of the staff of a hospital, school, social agency, or similar facility. That person must notify the person in charge of the facility or the designated delegate who must then report the abuse. A staff member who makes a report to the designated person is deemed to have fully complied with the law. Any other person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is being abused may report. A report must be made as soon as possible by telephone, FAX or email to DFCS Protective Services, which is designated by the Department of Human Resources, or to an appropriate law enforcement authority or District Attorney. If a report of child abuse is made by DFCS or independently discovered by DFCS, then DFCS must immediately notify the appropriate law enforcement authority or District Attorney. Legal Reference: O.C.G.A. 19-7-5. (c)(2)(D),(E)

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Gilmer County School System facilities have a prepared inspection report and management plan in accordance with the mandated requirements of the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) regulations (40 CFR Part 763) published by the Environmental Protection Agency on October 30, 1987. A management plan outlining the location of the material and steps taken to assure that this material will present no threat to building occupants is on file at each school and at the Maintenance office. Copies may be obtained at a cost of 25 cents per page or may be viewed at each school administration office.

RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION

FERPA permits the System to disclose information designated as Directory Information without the consent of the Parent or Eligible Student. Directory Information is information, the disclosure of which is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Among the purposes that the Directory Information exception facilitates is the release of student information in athletic and extracurricular programs, yearbooks, honor roll and other recognition lists, graduation programs, etc. Gilmer County Schools designated the following information as "Directory Information": name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, photograph, grade level, years of attendance, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, and honors and awards received, electronic mail (email) address, extracurricular activity audio recordings – directory information does not include audio recordings that accompany footage of students committing or being involved in a violation of law or district or school rules, extracurricular activity video recordings- directory information does not include video recordings of students committing or being involved in a violation of law or district or school rules. Unless the Parent or Eligible Student opt out of the disclosure of "Directory Information" the information designated as Directory Information above may be disclosed to appropriate legitimate agencies identified by the System, including, but not limited to, PTA/PTO, colleges, and military recruiters. You have the right to refuse to allow "Directory Information" to be disclosed. **In order to opt out of the disclosure of Directory Information, you must notify the principal of the school the student attends in writing within 10 days of receipt of this handbook.** The written notice must: (1) include the name of the student; (2) include a statement that the parent/guardian or eligible student is opting out of the disclosure of Directory Information under FERPA; and (3) be signed and dated by the parent, guardian, or eligible student.*

**Please note that your written notice will be effective for the current school year only and must be renewed on an annual basis should you wish to continue to opt out of the release of directory information.*

MEDIA RELEASE

Gilmer County Schools uses and releases photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings taken or recorded at its facilities and events for educational, instructional, or promotional purposes as determined by Gilmer County Schools for use in broadcast and media formats now existing or created in the future. These photographs and recordings often include depictions of students and/or parents engaged in school functions and activities. Any such photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings shall become the property of Gilmer County Schools and may be used by Gilmer County Schools or others with the consent of Gilmer County Schools and/or its representatives. As the parent of a student or as an eligible student (18 years of age or older), **you may elect to withhold your consent for Gilmer County Schools' use of photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings of you and/or your child. In order to withhold your consent for the disclosure of you and/or your child's photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings, the parent of the student or the eligible student must notify the principal of the school the student attends in writing within 10 days of receipt of this handbook.** The written notice must: (1) include the name of the student; (2) include a statement that the parent/guardian or eligible student is opting out of the release of photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings depicting the student; and (3) be signed and dated by the parent, guardian or eligible student. Please note that your written notice will be effective for the current school year only and must be renewed on an annual basis should you wish to continue to opt out of the release of photographs and recordings. Finally, please note that Gilmer County Schools will not be responsible for, and cannot control photographs, audio recordings, or video recordings captured by individuals who are not employed by, affiliated with, or under contract with Gilmer County Schools. Please contact your local school administration if you have further questions regarding this topic.

NOTICE OF GOOGLE SERVICES

At Gilmer County Schools, we use G Suite for Education. G Suite for Education is a set of educational productivity tools from Google including Gmail, Calendar, Docs, Classroom, and more used by tens of millions of students and teachers around the world. Students will use their G Suite accounts to complete assignments, communicate with their teachers, use Chromebooks, and learn 21st century digital citizenship skills. Parents/Guardians agree to give legal consent to the district to approve apps for educational use for their children.

Student access to certain G Suite services may be limited as the district deems necessary. For example, the district limits student use of email to teachers, other students, and a limited number of educational services (educational software, HOPE Scholarship, etc.). District limits on G Suite services can and will change during the year as needed.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION COORDINATORS

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006); disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990); or age (Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967-ADEA) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Students, parents, employees and the general public are hereby notified that it is the policy of the Gilmer County Board of Education to ensure non-discriminatory practices in educational programs or activities and in employment.

The following individuals have been designated to coordinate the School System's efforts to implement this nondiscriminatory policy:

Title IX	Nicole Pike, Director of Assessment & Compliance and Title IX
ADEA	Dana Berry, Director of Human Resources & Facilities
Title VIB	Jessica Chastain, Director of Student Services
Section 504	Jessica Chastain, Director of Student Services
ADA	Jessica Chastain, Director of Student Services
Perkins Act	Carla Foley, CEO of College and Career Academy

Grievance procedures or inquiries regarding this policy may be addressed to the persons listed above at:

Gilmer County Schools
134 Industrial Blvd, Ellijay, GA 30540
(706) 276-5000

Requests for disability assistance including requests for documents, information, or communications in alternate format may be submitted to the Administration & Technology Office:

email: jchastain@gilmerschools.com phone: (706) 276-5000

HARASSMENT STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Gilmer County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of gender, age, race, ethnic group, color, disability, religious belief, or national origin in the educational programs and activities, or admissions to facilities operated by the Gilmer County Board of Education, or in the employment practices of the school system. It is the express policy of the Gilmer County School Board to comply with all laws and regulations relating to discrimination now in effect or hereafter enacted.

The Gilmer County Board of Education does not and will not tolerate harassment of our students or employees. The term "harassment" includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, ethnic group, color, gender, religious belief, national origin, citizenship, age, or disability. "Harassment" also includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, unwelcome or offensive touching, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Violations of this policy will subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including immediate employment termination. Students violating this policy may be disciplined up to and including expulsion from school.

INSULT OR ABUSE OF EMPLOYEES

Any parent, guardian, or person other than a student at the public school in question who has been advised that minor children are present and who continues to upbraid, insult, or abuse any public school teacher, public school administrator, or public school bus driver in the presence and hearing of a pupil while on the premises of any public school or public school bus may be ordered by any of the above designated school personnel to leave the school premises or school bus, and upon failure to do so, such person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed $500 (O.C.G.A. 20-2-1182).

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS:

THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) afford parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review, the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School principal [or appropriate school official], clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parents or eligible students of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedure will be provided to the parent or eligible student with the notification of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to privacy of personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including school nurses and school resource officers); a member of the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a specific task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or online educational services provider); a contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom the school district has outsourced services, such as electronic data storage; or a parent or student serving on an official committee (such as a disciplinary or grievance committee) or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. The District allows school officials to access only student records in which they have a legitimate educational interest. School officials remain under the district's control with regard to the use and maintenance of PII, which may be used only for the purpose for which disclosure was made, and cannot be released to other parties without authorization.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the district discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

The district may disclose appropriate designated "directory information" without written consent, unless the parent or eligible student has advised the district to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the school to include this type of information from the student's education records in certain school publications, such as the annual yearbook, graduation or sports activity programs, and honor roll or other recognition lists.

The School District has designated the following information as directory information:

(a) Student's name, address and telephone number;
(b) Student's date and place of birth;
(c) Student's participation in official school activities and sports;
(d) Weight and height of members of an athletic team;
(e) Dates of attendance at schools within the district;
(f) Honors and awards received during the time enrolled in district schools;
(g) Grade and photograph.
(h) Electronic mail (email) address
(i) Extracurricular activity audio recordings - Directory information does not include audio recordings that accompany footage of students committing or being involved in a violation of law or district or school rules.
(j) Extracurricular activity video recordings - Directory information does not include video recordings of students committing or being involved in a violation of law or district or school rules.

Unless you, as a parent/guardian or eligible student, request otherwise, this information may be disclosed to the public upon request. In addition, two federal laws require school systems receiving federal financial assistance to provide military recruiters, upon request, with students' names, addresses, and telephone numbers unless parents have advised the school system that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. You have the right to refuse to allow all or any

part of the above information to be designated as directory information and to refuse to allow it to be disclosed to the public upon request without your prior written consent. If you wish to exercise this right, you must notify the principal of the school at which the student is enrolled in writing within a reasonable time after receipt of the notice as contained in the student handbook. (GCBOE Policy JR: Student Records)

4. You have the right to file with the United States Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by the school district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202.

5. **To obtain a copy of the policy that the Board of Education has adopted regarding access to student records.** Copies of this policy may be obtained by contacting the Administration & Technology Office of the Board of Education at: 134 Industrial Blvd, Ellijay, GA 30540, (706-276-5000) or by visiting the website @ www.gilmerschools.com

PRIVACY: PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA): NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS

PPRA affords parents and eligible students (18 or older or emancipated minors) certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)-

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of -

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Inspect, upon request and before administration or use -

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

Parents and eligible students will be notified at the beginning of the school year if the school district has identified the specific or approximate dates during the school year when any of the activities listed above are expected to be scheduled. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. The Board of Education has developed and adopted policies, in conjunction with parents, regarding these rights as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The district

will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The district will also directly notify parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey.

The school is required by federal law to give this notice to parents. However, the school does not have scheduled any such activities as are described above. If any such activities are initiated during the school year, parents will be notified accordingly and will be afforded all the rights described herein.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

PARENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW

ESSA Sec. 1112(e) (1)(A)

In Georgia, all LEA schools are required to notify parents at the beginning of the school year of their 'right to know' the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teacher(s) and paraprofessional(s).

The Notification

In compliance with the requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Gilmer County Schools would like to inform you that you may request the following information.

1. Whether the student's teacher -
    - has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
    - is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status through which Georgia qualifications or licensing criteria have been waived; and
    - is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
2. Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teachers' qualifications, please contact the school principal.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973: NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS OF STUDENTS

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students. For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact your local system's Section 504 Coordinator at the following address:

Section 504 Coordinator
Gilmer County Schools
134 Industrial Blvd
Ellijay, GA 30540
Phone: (706) 276-5000
Email jchastain@gilmerschools.com

The implementing regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provides parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his or her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.33.
2. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties who provide services not operated by or provided by the recipient are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has a right to participate in an educational setting (academic and nonacademic) with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate to his or her needs. 34 CFR 104.34.
4. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to a Section 504 determination of eligibility. 34 CFR 104.35.
6. You have the right to not consent to the school system's request to evaluate your child. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. You have the right to ensure that evaluation procedures, which may include testing, conform to the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to ensure that the school system will consider information from a variety of sources as appropriate, which may include aptitude and achievement tests, grades, teacher recommendations and observations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, medical records, and parental recommendations. 34 CFR 104.35.
9. You have the right to ensure that placement decisions are made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.
10. If your child is eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, including prior to any subsequent significant change of placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
11. You have the right to notice prior to any actions by the school system regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.
12. You have the right to examine your child's educational records. 34 CFR 104.36.
13. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the school system's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity to parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice and a copy of the school system's impartial hearing procedure upon request. 34 CFR 104.36.
15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer (school board members and other district employees are not considered impartial hearing officers), you have a right to a review of that decision according to the school system's impartial hearing procedure. 34 CFR 104.36.
16. You have the right to, at any time, file a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

SECTION 504 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

1. **Overview**:
   Any student or parent or guardian ("grievant") may request an impartial hearing due to the school system's actions or inactions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system's Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system's Section 504 Coordinator. The school system's Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing. The Section 504 Coordinator may be contacted through the school system's central office. Copies of the 504 Procedural Safeguards and Notice of Rights of Students and Parents under Section 504 may be found at the system website.

2. **Hearing Request**: The Request for the Hearing must include the following:
   a. The name of the student.
   b. The address of the residence of the student.

c. The name of the school the student is attending.
d. The decision that is the subject of the hearing.
e. The requested reasons for review.
f. The proposed remedy sought by the grievant.
g. The name and contact information of the grievant.

Within 10 business days from receiving the grievant's Request for Hearing, the Section 504 Coordinator will acknowledge the Request for Hearing in writing and schedule a time and place for a hearing. If the written Request for Hearing does not contain the necessary information noted above, the Section 504 Coordinator will inform the grievant of the specific information needed to complete the request. All timelines and processes will be stayed until the Request for Hearing contains the necessary information noted above.

3. **Mediation**:
The school system may offer mediation to resolve the issues detailed by the grievant in his or her Request for Hearing. Mediation is voluntary and both the grievant and school system must agree to participate. The grievant may terminate the mediation at any time. If the mediation is terminated without an agreement, the school system will follow the procedures for conducting an impartial hearing without an additional Request for Hearing.

4. **Hearing Procedures**:
a. The Section 504 Coordinator will obtain an impartial review official who will conduct a hearing within 45 calendar days from the receipt of the grievant's Request for Hearing unless agreed to otherwise by the grievant or a continuance is granted by the impartial review official.
b. Upon a showing of good cause by the grievant or school system, the impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may grant a continuance and set a new hearing date. The request for a continuance must be in writing and copied to the other party.
c. The grievant will have an opportunity to examine the child's educational records prior to the hearing.
d. The grievant will have the opportunity to be represented by legal counsel at his or her own expense at the hearing and participate, speak, examine witnesses and present information at the hearing. If the grievant is to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, he or she must inform the Section 504 Coordinator of that fact in writing at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. Failure to notify the Section 504 Coordinator in writing of representation by legal counsel shall constitute good cause for continuance of the hearing.
e. The grievant will have the burden of proving any claims he or she may assert. When warranted by circumstances or law, the impartial hearing officer may require the recipient to defend its position/decision regarding the claims (i.e. A recipient shall place a disabled student in the regular educational environment operated by the recipient unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the education of the person in the regular environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 C.F.R.§104.34). One or more representatives of the school system, who may be an attorney, will attend the hearing to present the evidence and witnesses, respond to the grievant testimony and answer questions posed by the review official.
f. The impartial review official shall not have the power to subpoena witnesses, and the strict rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings. The impartial review official shall have the authority to issue pre-hearing instructions, which may include requiring the parties to exchange documents and names of witnesses to be present.
g. The impartial review official shall determine the weight to be given any evidence based on its reliability and probative value.
h. The hearing shall be closed to the public.
i. The issues of the hearing will be limited to those raised in the written or oral request for the hearing.
j. Witnesses will be questioned directly by the party who calls them. Cross-examination of witnesses will be allowed. The impartial review official, at his or her discretion, may allow further examination of witnesses or ask questions of the witnesses.
k. Testimony shall be recorded by court reporting or audio recording at the expense of the recipient. All documentation related to the hearing shall be retained by the recipient.
l. Unless otherwise required by law, the impartial review official shall uphold the action of school system unless the grievant can prove that a preponderance of the evidence supports his or her claim.
m. Failure of the grievant to appear at a scheduled hearing unless prior notification of absence was provided and

approved by the impartial review official, or just cause is shown, shall constitute a waiver of the right to a personal appearance before the impartial review official.

5. **Decision**:
   The impartial review official shall issue a written determination within 20 calendar days of the date the hearing concluded. The determination of the impartial review official shall not include any monetary damages or the award of any attorney's fees.

6. **Review**: If not satisfied with the decision of the impartial review official, any party may pursue any right of review, appeal, cause of action or claim available to them under the law or existing state or federal rules or regulations.

GENDER EQUITY IN SPORTS NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

State law prohibits discrimination based on gender in the athletic programs of local school systems (Equity in Sports Act, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-315). Students are hereby notified that Gilmer County Schools does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs. Inquiries or complaints concerning sports equity in this school system may be submitted to the sports equity coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator for this system is Nicole Pike, and may be reached at the Administration & Technology Office, 134 Industrial Blvd., Ellijay, GA 30540, (706) 276-5000, and the Sports Equity Coordinator is Matt Johnson. He may be reached at Gilmer High School 408 Bobcat Trail, Ellijay, GA 30540, 706-276-5080.

HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH: NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act is designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school.

If your family lives in one of the following situations:

A. In a shelter, motel, vehicle or campground;
B. On the street;
C. In an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations; or
D. Doubled up with friends or relatives because of a lack of affordable housing

… then the school aged children in your family have a right to:

1. Go to school no matter where they live or how long they have lived there
2. Continue in the school they attended before the family became homeless, if that is the parent's choice and it is feasible
3. Receive transportation to the school they attended before your family became homeless
4. Participate in school programs with children who are not homeless
5. Enroll in school without giving a permanent address
6. Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of any records or documents required for enrollment
7. Receive the same special programs and services as all other children
8. Receive free lunch

Inquiries concerning educational services for homeless students in this school system may be submitted to the Amy Bradshaw, Homeless Liaison at the Larry Walker Education Center at (706) 276-5030.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA): NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Federal law concerning the education of students with disabilities, requires schools to provide parents of a child with a disability with a notice containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards available under the IDEA and U.S. Department of Education regulations.

Notice

Your school district must give you written notice (provide you certain information in writing), whenever the school system:

1. Proposes to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of yourchild, or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to your child; or
2. Refuses to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child or the provision of FAPE to your child.

Content of Notice

The written notice must:

1. Describe the action that your school district proposes or refuses to take;
2. Explain why your school district is proposing or refusing to take the action;
3. Describe each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report your school district used in deciding to propose or refuse the action;
4. Include a statement that you have protections under the procedural safeguards provisions in Part B of the IDEA;
5. Tell you how you can obtain a description of the procedural safeguards if the action that your school district is proposing or refusing is not an initial referral for evaluation;
6. Include resources for you to contact for help in understanding Part B of the IDEA;
7. Describe any other choices that your child's individualized education program (IEP) Team considered and the reasons why those choices were rejected; and provide a description of other reasons why your school district proposed or refused the action.

Inquiries concerning Special Education services in this school system may be submitted to Jessica Chastain, Director of Student Services located at the Administration & Technology Office 706-276-5000.

GEORGIA SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOLARSHIP

Special Needs Sponsorships

Parents of a student who receives special education services or a Section 504 plan may have the option to exercise public and private school choice. Under state law passed by the Georgia State Legislature, parents of qualified students who receive special education services or a Section 504 plan may request to transfer their child to another public or private school in Georgia provided that their child meets the statutory requirements set out by § 20-2-2114.

A school district considering a request for a transfer to its school system from another school system has the authority to approve or deny a public-school transfer request. A school district considering a transfer request can deny a request even if there is capacity and a program available that is aligned to the student's IEP or 504 plan within its System. If a request is approved, a school district can charge parent(s)/guardian(s) for the costs of educating a student during the first school year of the transfer.

For more information regarding private school scholarships and application process, please visit the Georgia Department of Education website @ https://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/Special-Needs-Scholarship-Program.aspx.

For additional information on public school transfers for special needs students, please contact Jessica Chastain, Director of Student Services, Administration & Technology Office (706) 276-5000 jchastain@gilmerschools.com.

CHILD FIND

Gilmer County Schools has the responsibility to attempt to locate all children believed to have disabilities, including children birth through age 3(served by Babies Can't Wait), preschool children ages 3–5 who are not already being served; children with disabilities who are enrolled in a private school in Gilmer County, or who are being home-schooled; children enrolled in Gilmer County Schools who are in need of services; homeless or migrant children with disabilities; and any other child believed to have disabilities who resides in Gilmer County. Upon locating such children, the county will evaluate, at no cost to the parent, a child suspected of having a disability and convene a meeting to include the parent to determine the child's eligibility for educational services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act and the Georgia Rules for Special Education. If you have a child, or know of a child, who is believed to have a disability and may be eligible for educational services under one of the Acts mentioned above, contact Jessica Chastain, Director of Student Services at the Administration and Technology Offices (706)276-5000 jchastain@gilmerschools.com.

TITLE I - FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The Board recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family. To effectively educate students, the schools and parents must work as knowledgeable partners. Parent and family engagement is an ongoing process that assists parents and families to meet their basic obligation as their child's first teacher and promotes clear, two-way communication between the home and school.

The Board and all Gilmer County Schools shall abide by and support all rules and regulations pertaining to Title I, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law 107-110, and Georgia's ESEA Flexibility Waiver approved Feb. 9, 2012. A written plan for Title I Family Engagement that establishes programs and practices to enhance family engagement and reflects the needs of students and families will be jointly developed by parents and school staff. School/Parent Compact will be provided to parent and families. The plan will support the development, implementation, and regular evaluation of the family engagement program.

The Superintendent or his or her designee shall supervise the development and annual review of Gilmer County Schools' Title I Family Engagement Plan to be incorporated into the plan developed pursuant to 20 U.S.C.A. § 6312. The Title I Family Engagement Plan shall be developed jointly with, approved by, and distributed to parents. The Title I Family Engagement Plan shall establish Gilmer County Schools' expectations for family engagement and shall describe how Gilmer County Schools will:

1. Engage parents in development of the plan required under 20 U.S.C.A. § 6312 and the process of school review and improvement;
2. Provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance;
3. Build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement;
4. Coordinate and integrate family engagement strategies under Title I with family engagement strategies under other instructional K–12 programs;
5. Annually evaluate, with the engagement of parents, the content and effectiveness of the Title I Family Engagement Plan in improving the academic quality of the schools served under this part, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background), and use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective family engagement, and to revise, if necessary, the Title I Family Engagement Plan; and

6. Involve families in the activities of the schools served under this part.

For more information contact Lindy Patterson, Gilmer County Schools 706-276-5000
lindy.patterson@gilmerschools.com

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT/STUDENT RECORDS

STUDENT ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Students must reside in Gilmer County with their parent, legal guardian, or other caregiver and must register for the local school of residence.

- Students must provide proof of residence.
- Students must have a certified copy of their birth certificate. *
- Students must have a Certificate of Immunization, Form 3231. **
- Students must have a Georgia Certificate of Eye, Ear, Nutrition and Dental Examination, Form 3300.
- Students are requested to present their Social Security card.

Central Enrollment is located at the Administration and Technology Offices of Gilmer County Schools.

***Requirements differ for qualified Migrant, Out of School Youth, and McKinney Vento students.**

****All students must have a current and completed Georgia Department of Public Health Form 3231. This form is required by state law. This form may be obtained from a local health department or personal physician. Students coming from another state or country should contact a Georgia Health Department or Georgia physician to have their immunizations transferred to GA Form 3231. A child whose parent or legal guardian objects to immunization of a child on the grounds that the immunization conflicts with the religious beliefs of the parent or guardian is required to complete GA Form 2208 as documentation. GA Form 2208 must be notarized. Gilmer County Schools have notaries available on site. A copy of GA Form 2208 can be found at the end of this document and can be downloaded from the Gilmer Schools website.**

STUDENT ENROLLMENT AGE REQUIREMENTS

Students who are five years of age on or before September 1 are eligible for entrance to kindergarten. Students who are six years of age on or before September 1 are eligible for entrance to first grade.

SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT AND STUDENT TRANSFER OPTIONS

Parents/guardians interested in school assignment should review the current School Board Policy and guidelines regarding Student Assignment (Policy JBCC) and Student Assignment to Schools (Policy JBCCA) which are posted on the following site: www.gilmerschools.com. The Intra-District Transfer Option states a parent/guardian can elect to send a child to another public school in Gilmer County as long as there is classroom space available at the school after the initial enrollment period of students. If a parent elects to exercise this choice option, the parent assumes all costs associated with transporting the student to and from the selected school. Also, a student who transfers to another school pursuant to GA Code may, at his or her election, continue to attend such school until the student completes all grades of the school. Note: A transferring student who completes all grades available at the receiving school does not automatically receive enrollment preference to the feeder school. Vacant seats available at schools will be determined in May and published on the district's website by May 15. Applications may be taken at the Central Administration office or completed online. Only applications received during the month of June (1st - 30th), will be considered valid and eligible for placement.

Parents are eligible to transfer their child once per academic year under the Intra-District Option. Only students who participate in the Public School Choice application process are eligible. Students who enroll into the GCSS during an academic year must wait until the following summer to enter the application process. After the application window has closed, eligible applications will be sorted by campus preference and order of date of application submission. Prior to the first day of instruction, Principals will notify out-of-district parent(s)/guardian(s) if their student was selected for assignment at the school of choice and of campus enrollment procedures.

MEDICATION PROCEDURE

When at all possible, we encourage you to schedule your child's medication so that it may be given at home under your direct supervision. However, we realize that this is not always possible. Gilmer County Schools Medication Authorization Form, available at your school, must be completed by the parent/guardian before a medication is given. A separate form is necessary for each medication request.

The school will not accept more than a one-month supply of prescription or over-the-counter medication. Prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy container. The written instructions on the pharmacy label will be followed. Over-the-counter medications must be in the original sealed container. Dosage will not exceed instructions on label regardless of parent instructions. A secondary prescription bottle must be provided for students receiving medication during the After-School Program. Parents/students should deliver any medications to the proper school personnel immediately upon arrival at school. Please contact your child's principal for guidelines specific to your school.

Forms are available to provide for special situations such as injections, personal possession of inhalers, epi-pens, etc. Medications cannot be sent in a student's backpack or on the bus. All medications must be brought to the school by the parent/guardian. The disciplinary code prescribes severe consequences for use or possession of medications unless used in compliance with school guidelines.

Educational Programs Guidelines and Information

Absences and Excuses

A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or during other required school hours except for illness or other permissible cause, unless with written permission of the teacher, principal, or other duly authorized school official. No student shall encourage, urge or counsel other students to violate this policy.

Any student 16 years of age or older, who is absent unlawfully either 10 consecutive days or 40 total days may be dropped from the attendance records. The principal has the discretion of entering or reentering in the present grading period any student 16, or older, who has failed to attend for unlawful reasons.

As permitted under state law and State Board of Education policies, students may be excused lawfully for the following reasons:

- personal illness,
- serious illness or death in the family,
- special and recognized religious holidays observed by one's faith,
- absence as mandated by order of governmental agencies,
- Conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to one's health or safety, and registering to vote or voting, (for a period not to exceed one day).
- any student whose parent or guardian is in the U.S. Armed Forces/National Guard, and said parent or guardian has been called to duty for, or is on leave from, an overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted up to five excused absences per school

year, for the day(s) missed from school to visit with the parent or legal guardian prior to such deployment or during such leave.

- High school principals are authorized to excuse absences by students who are visiting prospective college campus as visiting juniors or graduating seniors (limit two days).

Excessive **excused** absences (no medical notes) may be reviewed by the AST to determine next steps. Following **ten** individual days with parent handwritten excuses, medical documentation will need to be provided. If medical documentation cannot be provided, any further handwritten excuses may be deemed as an unexcused absence.

Students shall be counted "present at school" when in attendance at school for at least one half of the instructional day, attending a school or school system-sponsored field trip, participating in activities or program sponsored by 4-H, or serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly (at the middle and high school level, attendance is assessed period-by-period, but students would still be credited with being present as it relates to field trips and service as pages).

FOSTER CARE STUDENT ATTENDANCE

A student who is in a foster home or otherwise in the foster care system under the Division of Family and Children Services of the Department of Human Services who attends court proceedings relating to the student's foster care, shall be credited as present by the school and shall not be counted as an absence, either excused or unexcused, for any day, portion of a day, or days missed from school.

REQUIREMENTS/TIME LIMITS FOR STUDENT EXCUSES

Excuses for student absences will be furnished to the school in writing on the day the student returns to school, and will be evaluated by the principal or a designee to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. Excuses should contain the student's name, reason for absence, date(s) of the absence, and the parent's/guardian's signature.

For purposes of accurate record-keeping and student accountability, all absences should be resolved within five school days of the student's return to school—excuses received after that time limit may not be considered unless the Principal deems extenuating circumstances exist.

TRUANCY

SBOE RULE 160-5-1-.10 defines "TRUANCY" as any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than five days of unexcused absences. Students with six unexcused absences will be referred to the school social worker. Parents of students with excessive absences may be required by the school administrator to provide physician's notes for absences to be considered excused.

TARDIES AND/OR EARLY CHECK-OUTS

Any unexcused tardy (arriving to school/class beyond the posted school start-time) or early check-out (leaving school/class before the posted school end-time) can negatively impact a student's attendance record and jeopardize his/her overall achievement due to lost instructional time.

Due to the impact of absences, tardies and early check-outs, our schools have developed interventions that would reduce the amount of lost instructional time due to unexcused reasons. Parents and students should know that excuses for school tardies and/or early check-outs are governed by the same State-established rules regarding school absences. These rules are listed in the previous section dealing with "Absences and Excuses."

HOSPITAL/HOMEBOUND SERVICES

A student who has a medically diagnosed, non-communicable condition, which restricts him or her to home or hospital for ten (10) or more school days, may be eligible for hospital/homebound instruction. Please contact the school principal or Amy Bradshaw, Gilmer County Schools Social Worker, for further information regarding this program. Students placed on HHB are not eligible to participate in school related programs or extracurricular activities.

HEARING AND VISION SCREENINGS

With parental consent, the school system conducts hearing and vision screenings for students as needed and as requested by teacher or parent. Notification and follow-up information is communicated to parents/guardians of students who do not pass these screenings and need a possible follow up with a physician.

INFINITE CAMPUS PARENT® (PORTAL)

Infinite Campus is a confidential and secure website where parents can access current information about their child's attendance and grades. Please click the link below to set up your Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

https://www.gilmerschools.com/cms/One.aspx?portalId=93632&pageId=941852

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY A T T E N D A N C E

Student attendance at extracurricular and non-instructional events is guided by the Gilmer County Schools Code of Conduct for Students. All persons attending these events are subject to the following Event Attendance/Code of Conduct:

EVENT ATTENDANCE/CODE OF CONDUCT

OUR STAFF RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE WHAT CONSTITUTES UNACCEPTABLE/DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR AND TO DENY ADMITTANCE TO ANYONE.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

- NO WEAPONS OF ANY KIND (EVEN WITH PERMIT)
  AUTHORITY: GEORGIA LAW O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1
- NO ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES
- NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
- NO PETS OR ANIMALS OF ANY KIND
  OTHER THAN SERVICE ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

INSPECTION GUIDELINES

You are entering a School Safety Zone;
YOU AND/OR YOUR PERSONAL BELONGINGS ARE SUBJECT TO INSPECTION
for the purpose of assuring compliance and maintaining order.

WE MAINTAIN A "FAMILY FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT" NO SMOKING
NO EXIT PASSES

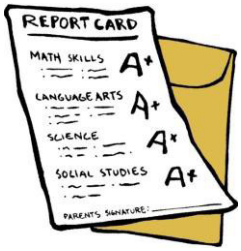
MAKE-UP WORK

It is the expectation of the Gilmer County Board of Education that all work missed due to any absence will be made-up. Some work by its very nature is impossible to make-up and may necessitate alternative assignments. The principal or designee will be the final authority in determining alternative assignments.

The responsibility for arranging to complete work missed is to be assumed by the student and parent/guardian in conjunction with the teacher. Make-up work is to be completed at the time specified by the teacher/principal. The time limit is not to exceed ten (10) school days. Exceptions will be decided by the parent/guardian, student, teacher and principal, with the principal having the final decision.

REPORT CARD DATES

End of Term		Day	Report Card Day	Day	Total Days in Term
October 11, 2023	(K-8)	Wednesday	October 13, 2023	Friday	45
December 20, 2023	(K-12)	Wednesday	January 9, 2024	Friday	45
March 13, 2024	(K-8)	Wednesday	March 19, 2024	Tuesday	45
May 24, 2024	(K-12)	Friday	May 24, 2024*	Friday	45



These dates are subject to change due to days missed as a result of school closings or schedule changes. High School dates may vary according to school schedule.

ES Only: End-of-Year report cards will be sent home the last day of school.

***MS/HS Only:** End-of-Year report cards will be available within one week of the last day of school.

INTERIM PROGRESS REPORTS

September 6, 2023	Wednesday	Friday, September 8, 2023
November 10, 2023	Friday	Wednesday, November 15, 2023
February 7, 2024	Wednesday	Friday, February 9, 2024
April 24, 2024	Wednesday	Friday, April 26, 2024

These dates are subject to change due to days missed as a result of school closings or schedule changes. High School dates may vary according to school schedule.

ES/MS Only: Students in Grades 1-8 will receive a progress report.

GRADING SYSTEM

Kindergarten

Academic Skills Code:

End of Year State Reporting:

P = Pass
F = Fail

GKIDS 2.0 Reporting:

Exceeding
Demonstrating
Developing
Emerging
Beginning
Not Yet Demonstrating
Not Yet Assessed

GRADES 1 –12

Academic Grades

A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89
C	70– 79
F	Below 70

TRANSFERRING CREDIT

The Board will accept student course credit earned in an accredited school, which must have been accredited or hold provisional status at the time the credit was earned.

The Board will not substitute courses and exempt students from the required secondary minimum core curriculum unless the student transferred from an accredited secondary school or the courses presented for credit include concepts and skills based on the state-adopted curriculum for grades 9-12 approved by the SBOE.

Transfer credit shall be validated for courses taken at non-accredited schools, home study programs, and non-traditional educational centers.

Elementary and middle school students transferring from home study programs, non-accredited schools or non-traditional educational centers will be placed at the appropriate grade level in a probationary placement based on satisfactory performance on standardized or locally developed tests focusing on grade level or subject area.

High school students transferring from home study programs, non-accredited schools or non-traditional educational centers will be placed in the appropriate grade level based on the number of units earned toward graduation. Units of credit shall be granted based on satisfactory performance on standardized or locally developed tests focusing on subject area. High school transfer students must take any state-mandated assessments, including applicable End of Course assessments.

For student transcript purposes, grades for courses taken by transferring students will be accepted as recorded on the transcript from the issuing school or program. Letter grades for high school transfer students will be converted to numerical grades using either a conversion scale provided by the prior school or, if a scale is not available, using a conversion formula established by the Superintendent or designee. Transferred course titles, if necessary, will be changed to appropriate course titles in the list of state funded courses.

COURSE SEQUENCE (High School ONLY)

The course sequence for students at Gilmer High School is determined by student need and prerequisite skills needed in order for students to successfully complete age appropriate courses throughout their four years of high school. In addition, some courses are dependent on staffing and enrollment. Contact your child's guidance counselor for course sequencing specific to your child.

COURSE SCHEDULE CHANGES (High School ONLY)

Schedule changes are made during the first five school days of each semester. Schedule changes are permitted for the following reasons:

- A course that is required for graduation.
- A course that is needed to complete a pathway.
- A course that has already been taken.

After the fifth day of the semester, schedule changes may not be permitted.

CUMULATIVE AVERAGE AND CLASS RANKING (High School ONLY)

Class ranking will be determined by the weighted cumulative core academic numeric grade average (Core Academic NGA) - calculated to the third decimal of graduating seniors at the completion of high school graduation requirements. The weighted cumulative academic average summarizes each student's academic performance in high school. The weighted core academic average is used in determining eligibility for numerous awards and activities and may be a factor in college admissions.

For the purpose of computing class rank, students will receive the following additional points added to their semester average for the course if they receive a passing grade of 70 or higher:

Honors Classes	5 points
Advanced Placement	10 points
Dual Enrollment	10 points

Note: All bonus points earned through the successful completion of an Honors Class, Advanced Placement Class, or a course in a post-secondary institution will be applied to a student's transcript when the credit for the course is awarded. However, for HOPE Scholarship purposes, only AP courses and Dual Enrollment classes that have been verified by the Georgia Student Finance Commission are eligible for bonus points. HOPE bonus points are calculated on a 4-point GPA scale. For more information regarding HOPE Scholarship, please refer to the Georgia Student Finance Commission Web site at www.gsfc.org.

VALEDICTORIAN/SALUTATORIAN (High School ONLY)

Valedictorian/Salutatorian

The student with the highest class ranking as determined by the weighted cumulative core academic numeric grade average (Core Academic NGA) shall be named as the Valedictorian. The student with the second highest class ranking as determined by the weighted cumulative core academic numeric grade average (Core Academic NGA) shall be recognized as the Salutatorian.

A numeric average for senior awards is calculated at the end of the first semester of the senior year. Only numerical grades from academic classes, in the content areas of Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and World Languages in grades 9-12, will be used to find the numeric average.

Students must take a minimum or combination of five courses in Honors, Advanced Placement, and/or Dual Enrollment. Students must have been enrolled in one entire semester and have started that semester within the first 5 days of the school at Gilmer High School to be named Valedictorian or Salutatorian. Transfer credit used for calculation of the weighted core academic average for determination of the Valedictorian/Salutatorian shall be accepted only from a Georgia School defined in Rule 160-5-1-.15

If two students achieve the same highest senior rank, they will be named Co-Valedictorians and no Salutatorian will be selected. If two students achieve the same second highest senior rank, they will be named Co-Salutatorians.

The Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be selected after the first semester grades are available. No changes will be made after 2nd semester grades have posted for Seniors.

ACADEMIC AWARDS (High School ONLY)

Honor Roll
Students in grades 9-12 must achieve a cumulative average of 90.00 for the current semester. Students earning this distinction will be invited to the academic honors ceremony. Transfer students to Gilmer High School will be recognized provided they are transferring from an accredited high school.

Academic Letter/Pin
A student is eligible for an academic letter when they have reached the following:

- Successfully completed four honors, AP or Dual Enrollment courses (Alg I and 9th Lit are considered as honors courses when taken as an 8th grader)
- Have a 90 or higher Core Academic GPA

A student will receive an academic pin when they have completed the following:

- Continued to take at least one honors, AP or Dual Enrollment course.
- Maintain a Core Academic GPA of 90 or higher.

Honor Graduate:
A student is considered an Honor Graduate if they:

- Have a Core Academic Weighted GPA of 90.0 or higher at the end of first semester of the senior year.

Honor Graduate with Distinction: Students who have a numeric weighted average for senior awards greater than or equal to 95.0 and have taken at least five honors, AP, or Dual Enrollment courses.

Final grades are not to be rounded.

Click on the link below to learn more about Presidential Scholar and other state recognition programs
https://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Excellence-Recognition/Pages/default.aspx

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The Gilmer Board of Education considers the curriculum of Gilmer High School to be a four-year program. As such, the curriculum should have adequate courses for all students.

Students who enroll from another state must meet the graduation requirements for the graduating class they enter and the state assessment requirements as referenced in State Board Rule 160-3-1-.07, Testing Programs - Student Assessment.

A course shall count only once for satisfying any unit of credit requirement for graduation. See the following chart:

Classes 2024-2025

AREAS OF STUDY	Units Required
(I) English/Language Arts*	4
(II) Mathematics*	4
(III) Science*	4
The 4th Science unit may be used to meet both the science and elective requirement.	
(IV) Social Studies*	3
(V) CTAE and/or World Languages and/or Fine Arts	3
(VI) Health and Physical Education*	1
(VII) Electives - 1 of which must be an additional CTAE, Fine Arts, World Language, Dual Enrollment, or AP course.	5
TOTAL UNITS	24

*Required Courses and/or Core Courses

Class of 2026 and Beyond

AREAS OF STUDY	Units Required
(I) English/Language Arts*	4
(II) Mathematics*	4
(III) Science*	4
The 4th Science unit may be used to meet both the science and elective requirement.	
(IV) Social Studies*	4
(V) Pathway Completion ***in one of the following areas:*** CTAE, Fine Arts, World Language, or Advanced Academics**	3
(VI) Health and Physical Education*	1
(VII) Electives	6
TOTAL UNITS	26

*Required Courses and/or Core Courses

** The Pathway Completion requirement may be waived at the principal's discretion under extenuating academic circumstances.

PROMOTION, PLACEMENT AND RETENTION

Gilmer County Schools acknowledges that the awarding of grades and all decisions relative to promotion, placement and retention are serious responsibilities. Promotion, Placement and Retention Policy (IHE) outlines appropriate pupil progression and provides additional information based upon State Board of Education (SBOE) requirements. The policy, which is available on the Gilmer County Schools website, defines promotion, placement and retention for all grade levels K-12.

Gilmer County Schools follows state and federal guidelines for promotion, placement and retention.

GIFTED EDUCATION SERVICES

Students who are placed in the Gifted Program must meet eligibility requirements as set forth by the Georgia Department of Education.

1. To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must either -
    a. score at the 99th percentile (for grades K-2) or the 96th percentile (for grades 3-12) on the composite or full-scale score of a norm-referenced test of mental ability and meet one of the achievement criteria described in below or
    b. qualify through a multiple-criteria assessment process by meeting the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.
2. To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must meet the criterion score on a norm-referenced test and must qualify in two other categories by either assessment, observational data collected on his or her performance or produce a superior product as described below. Information shall be collected in each of the four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.
3. Test scores used to establish eligibility shall have been administered within the past two calendar years.
4. Any data used in one area to establish a student's eligibility shall not be used in any other data category.

Because Georgia school systems are dedicated to promoting the cognitive and affective growth of gifted and high-ability learners, the Georgia Association for Gifted Children and the Georgia Department of Education have collaborated to provide you with updated standards for your gifted education program. These standards which are based on Revised National Association for Gifted Children Pre-K-12 are as follows:

Assessment Standards:

Standard A1: The local education agency (LEA) uses the research-based student identification process as established by Georgia Board of Education policy in order to ensure equitable access to appropriate services for all gifted learners.

Standard A2: All teachers assess student progress in order to develop and modify instructional practices.

Curriculum Planning and Instruction:

Standard CP&I1: The LEA employs rigorous and relevant curricula K-12 to accommodate the range of academic and intellectual needs of gifted learners.

Standard CP&I2: The LEA employs diverse and effective instructional practices to address the learning needs of gifted learners.

Learning Environments:

Standard LE1: The LEA requires learning experiences which foster personal and social responsibility, multicultural competence, and interpersonal and technical communication skills for citizenship in the global environment of the 21st century.

Programming:

Standard P1: The LEA provides a full continuum of options to meet the demonstrated needs of K-12 gifted learners in academic areas, the arts, and career technical education; services are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging.

Professional Development:

Standard PD1: Gifted education specialists participate in comprehensive professional learning that is relevant to needs of gifted learners.

Standard PD2: All school personnel involved in the education of gifted learners participate in professional learning that focuses on the needs and characteristics of gifted learners.

There are basic steps for determining the gifted eligibility of a student:

1. Reported or Automatic Referral- Nomination that initiates referral process
2. Review of Nomination –Decision-making team considers data collected and decides if it is appropriate to proceed with formal evaluation
3. Formal Evaluation – Testing is conducted by Testing is conducted by educator credentialed for assessments
5. Identification of Students Eligible for Gifted Services –Eligibility team reviews assessment results and makes recommendations based on state criteria.

A student may be referred for consideration for gifted education services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, and other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities. The purpose of the referral process is to collect existing information about the student being nominated. The appropriate nomination form should be completed by the person nominating a student for evaluation. Forms are submitted to the Gifted Education Teacher.

For a more extensive explanation of the process for qualifying and receiving Gifted services, refer to the Gifted Education Manual. A copy can be found on the Gilmer County Schools website.

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, or handicapping condition. The Georgia Department of Education does not discriminate in any educational programs or activities. Gilmer County Schools Gifted Programs adhere to non-discriminatory laws.

HEALTH RESOURCE INSTRUCTION

Georgia law requires that sex education and AIDS prevention instruction be a part of the curriculum. Abstinence, or saying no to sexual involvement, will be stressed. Parents have the right provided in O.C.G.A. 20-2-143, which states, "Any parent or legal guardian of a child to whom the course of study set forth in this code section is to be taught shall have the right to elect, in writing, that such child not receive such course of study."

Gilmer County Schools is currently mandated in a statewide Georgia Department of Education initiative to provide physical education program activities focused on improving the physical fitness and well-being of Georgia students. The initiative is based on the FITNESSGRAM Program, which includes assessing the physical fitness levels of individual students using research-based criterion- referenced standards developed by The Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research. FITNESSGRAM is a quality assessment for three reasons:

1. FITNESSGRAM establishes a baseline from which a student can set goals and check progress to help in planning for lifelong physical activity and to maintain and improve levels of fitness. Fitness assessments measure aerobic capacity, muscular strength/endurance, flexibility and body composition.
2. FITNESSGRAM provides recommended activity program options that will help students work toward meeting established standards for optimal physical fitness.
3. FITNESSGRAM is non-competitive. It does not compare students to other students. FITNESSGRAM uses "Health Fitness Zones" to determine overall fitness. **Individual fitness assessments are considered an educational record; accordingly, the results are confidential.**

The FITNESSGRAM Program/Assessment includes:

- The Pacer (measures aerobic capacity)
- Push Ups (measures upper body muscular strength/endurance)
- Curl Ups (measures abdominal muscular strength/endurance)
- Back Saver Sit and Reach (measures flexibility)
- Height/Weight (measures body composition)

Students in grades 1-3 will practice and become familiar with the above assessments; but only height and weight will be recorded. Students in grades 4-12 will be evaluated and results will be recorded on all of the above assessments. Students enrolled in a physical education class taught by a certified physical education teacher will be assessed.

A confidential, FITNESSGRAM report will be prepared for each participating student in grades 4-12. This report will include assessment scores and information on the FITNESSGRAM "Health Fitness Zones" and will be provided with the student's final report card. For elementary school students in grades 4, 5 and 6, you will be given an opportunity in the Spring to request the FITNESSGRAM Parent Report be sent directly to your home. The authorization form will be provided to you at that time. Complete the form and return it with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. For more information regarding the FITNESSGRAM assessment, please refer to www.FITNESSGRAM.net/faqparents. If you have other questions, please contact your child's physical education teacher.

TEXTBOOKS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Once textbooks and instructional materials paid for by public funds are issued to a student, the responsibility for the return of these materials to the school for further use shall be the total responsibility of the student and his or her parents/guardians.

When textbooks, library books or other instructional resource materials are not returned to the school in a form suitable for continued use, it shall be the responsibility of the student and his/her parents/ guardians to reimburse Gilmer County Schools for the full replacement cost of textbooks, library books or other instructional materials.

In cases involving damaged books or materials, such materials shall become the property of the student and his/her parents/guardians once replacement funds are received by the school. **In no case shall a student be eligible to participate in graduation exercises and activities of Gilmer County Schools if debts related to lost or damaged books or materials remain unpaid.**

Students who meet graduation requirements but are ineligible for graduation exercises because of unpaid debts related to textbooks, library books, other instructional materials, and other school equipment shall receive their official high school diploma by mail along with an official transcript; however, no request for forwarding of transcripts to any source shall be honored.

A parent may learn about his or her minor child's courses of study, including, but not limited to, parental access to instructional materials intended for use in the child's classroom, by submitting the request in writing to the school principal. Such instructional materials will be made available for parental review during the first two weeks of each grading period (the beginning of each 9 week grading period for elementary/middle school and the beginning of each semester grading period for high

school.) Instructional materials are listed on the Gilmer County School website and will be available in each schools' media center during the review period upon parent request.

A parent may object to instructional materials intended for use in his or her minor child's classroom or recommended by his or her minor child's teacher by submitting the objection in writing to the school principal.

CHROMEBOOK 1 TO 1

Below is the link for Chromebook information. By clicking on this link, you will find the Gilmer 1 to 1 Mobile Computing Device Parent and Student Agreement and the Administrative Guidelines Regarding Technology Use. By signing this handbook, you are agreeing to both of these documents. The Opt-Out Letter can be found in the Forms section of this handbook.
https://www.gilmerschools.com/district/technology/chromebook_1-to-1

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

SCHOOL NUTRITION

The School Nutrition Program shall be viewed as part of the total educational program through the cooperative efforts of administrators, teachers, and school nutrition personnel. The goal of the School Nutrition Program is to provide acceptable meals which are nutritionally sound to all students, regardless of income or family status. These meals should be delivered with nutrition education so that students are equipped for a lifetime of nutritional wellness. "Acceptable" means that foods are sanitary, of good quality, of adequate portion size, attractive, nutritious, and of such type that in combinations students will consume.

Alterations to Student Meals Medical Reasons: Special diets and alterations to the USDA meal requirements for students not classified as handicapped are permissible only if based on medical documentation stating that such variations are necessary for medical reasons. A diet order must be received from a medical doctor, physician assistant or registered dietitian, which includes at a minimum, the food(s) to be omitted and appropriate suggested substitute(s), the medical reason for the alteration, and effective dates. The statement must be maintained on file at the school and be available for audit purposes.

Students with disabilities who have chewing and swallowing difficulties may need to have the physical characteristics of their foods changed; i.e., menus may need modification to include softer foods such as cooked carrots rather than raw carrots, and some foods may need to be chopped, ground, or pureed. Some students with disabilities may need low-calorie meals or high-calorie meals. These modifications can usually be made within the meal pattern requirements. Still others may require commercially prepared food/supplements. Since the feeding of a handicapped student is a part of the student's total care plan, the School Nutrition Director should work with the student's teacher or therapist, provider of medical care, and/or Director of Student Services to determine the best way to meet the student's needs. The specific modifications must be included in the student's Individual Education Program (IEP). When the student's IEP is prepared, it must 1) address verification that special meals are needed because of the handicap, and 2) prescribe the alternative foods and forms of foods needed to meet the student's special dietary needs.

Adult Meals All adults, other than the school nutrition program personnel and those who provide a service to the school nutrition program, are required to pay for lunches. It is the responsibility of the Manager and Principal in the individual school to make sure all adults pay for school meals.

MEAL COSTS AND MONTHLY MENUS

School	Meal	STUDENT	STUDENT Additional Meal	ADULT	VISITORS (Adults/Child)
All schools (PK-12)	Breakfast	No cost	$2.75	$2.75	$3.25
PK-5	Lunch	$2.45	$4.25	$4.25	$4.75
6-12	Lunch	$2.60	$4.25	$4.25	$4.75

Meal Costs and Monthly Menus Student, system employee, and visitor lunch prices will be set annually and approved by the Board of Education. Current meal prices and the monthly menus can be found at www.gilmerschools.com.

GUIDELINES FOR OUTSIDE MEALS AND VISITORS

Meals Brought From Home The School Nutrition Program will not be responsible for the safety of meals brought from home by students or faculty. Due to limited storage facilities and safety, storage of meals brought from home are the responsibility of the person bringing the meal. All students are encouraged to eat a nutritious meal provided by the school cafeteria and milk is provided to drink with their meals.

Outside Meals It is the policy of Gilmer County Schools to provide students with healthy, nutritious, economical meals that follow all guidelines set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture. It is also the policy to provide a healthy campus for all students. All staff and visitors who wish to eat with their students on specified access days will be asked to check in with the front office, receive a visitor pass and have commercially prepared food placed within a non-identifiable container or transfer the food and/or drink items into non-identifiable container before entering the campus. The non- identifiable packaging is to avoid promoting the consumption of food that is below the standards set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture. Students who leave campus and purchase commercially prepared food while away from campus will be asked to transfer food into a non-identifiable container before entering the school campus. Staff will also be asked to promote the consumption of healthy, nutritious foods by placing all commercially prepared items into non-identifiable containers before entering the school cafeterias.

STUDENT MEAL PAYMENTS AND CHARGES

Meal Payments The goal is not to prevent students from eating, but to establish sound fiscal responsibility for the program at the school level. Checks or cash may be submitted to the school cafeteria, with student's name and/or lunch number in a sealed envelope. Cafeteria payments may be submitted online. Student account balances may be checked and accessed from home at any time using Infinite Campus. There is no fee to check student account balances or to access purchase history. Charges are expected to be cleared at the end of each school year. All charges not cleared from previous years, will accrue and shall carry over into the proceeding school year.

Parents need to take care of these charges as soon as possible. By keeping your child's account current, you help to keep our costs at a minimum and avoid increases to meal prices.

If you have questions, please contact School Nutrition Director, Patricia Partin at 706-276-5000 or by e-mail to patricia.partin@gilmerschools.com.

Student Meal Charges

- Students who need to charge lunch, will be given a complete reimbursable meal.
- School Nutrition staff will inform students that meal balance is low or delinquent as they come through the serving line.

- Student meal account letters will be given to homeroom teachers weekly to be sent home.
- Once charges reach $10, parent notification (phone call, email) will be made by School Nutrition staff.
- Weekly list of students who owe $10 or more will be given to the principals of each school.
- A charge amount of $15 or more will result in a letter
- Charges reaching $25 or above will result in a phone call to the parents from the School Nutrition Office.
- Once charge amount reaches $50, the principal will phone the parents to discuss the situation.
- Students in grades 6-12 will not be allowed to participate in end of the year activities who owe meal charges.
- It is the goal of the school district to eliminate the debt at the end of each academic year.
- When charge exceeds $50.00 and the principal has not been successful in collecting unpaid charges, the School Nutrition Director may send a letter to parents as notification the parent has 30 days to pay charges. If not paid within the 30 days, the charges may be turned over to a collection agency.

Adult Meal Charges

- Visitors may not charge.
- School employees may charge up to $10/month. All charges must be paid in full on or before the 5th of the following month.

Extra Items/ A La Carte

- If a student owes charges, he/she will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items, except for milk until the charges are paid.

SAFE USAGE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES/EQUIPMENT

It is imperative that any student, parent, or community member using school facilities and/or equipment, whether it be for recreational or educational purposes, do so in a responsible and safe manner and under appropriate supervision. School facilities and/or equipment are not to be used for any purpose other than for what they are designed. This applies to any and all playgrounds, gymnasiums, auditoriums, kitchens, stadiums, field houses, outdoor education classrooms, stairwells, or other areas, which may be accessible before, during, or after school hours.

SCHOOL-SPONSORED CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Schools are responsible for annually notifying parents regarding all school-sponsored clubs and organizations. While this notification may be done through the school's websites, schools will determine the most appropriate vehicle for this notification. Additionally, parents/guardians must be given the opportunity to withhold participation of their students in all, or selected, clubs via written notification to the school.

FUNDRAISING, SOLICITATIONS, AND SALES OF ITEMS

No school sponsored fundraiser by a club, athletic group or other school organizations is permitted to solicit funds from students without prior approval from the school principal and Board of Education. This does not include PTOs or other Parent Clubs/ Organizations. Students may not sell items on campus, either before school, after school, or during the school day, without the prior approval of the principal.

NO PASS/NO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

GRADES 6-12: COMPETITIVE INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES are defined as any organized competition between schools that is held outside the regular instructional day. A competitive interscholastic activity is an activity specifically pertaining to any organized athletic sport including cheerleading. To be eligible for participation, a resident student, other than home study students, must be enrolled and attending the full six segments as defined in the Quality Basic Education Act or the equivalent thereof.

NOTE: The Georgia High School Association has a cooperative relationship with the Georgia Board of Education to establish statewide regulations for interscholastic competition in grades 9-12.

Gilmer County Schools endorses and adopts the requirements set forth in the GHSA constitution when making decisions regarding rules and policies for competitive interscholastic activities.

Residents students, other than home study students, eligibility requirements:

REQUIREMENT	COMPETITIVE INTERSCHOLATIC ACTIVITIES
All Students Grades 9-12	Pass 2.5 units the semester immediately preceding participation (except first semester 9th grade students) and be enrolled and attending the full six segments as defined in the Quality Basic Education Act or the equivalent thereof during the semester of participation.
First Year Participants (9TH Grade)	First semester: No Requirements; 2nd semester: Pass a minimum of 2.5 units previous semester.
Second Year Participants	Pass a minimum of 2.5 units previous semester; earn 5 units leading toward graduation
Third Year Participants	Pass a minimum of 2.5 units previous semester; earn 11 units leading toward graduation
Fourth Year Participants	Pass a minimum of 2.5 units previous semester; earn 17 units leading toward graduation
Fifth Year Participants	Not Eligible
Age	Must NOT have attained the 19th birthday prior to May 1st preceding the year of participation
Enrollment	Must meet Gilmer County BOE Policy JBCC: Student Assignment
Residency	Must reside within the school's designated attendance zone with a custodial parent/guardian and have not previously attended another high school (public or private) while living in this attendance zone as required for GHSA activities.
Medical	Must satisfy medical clearance procedures including an annual physical exam/medical history, proof of insurance, consent form as required for certain GHSA activities.
Drug Screening	Sign a "Consent for Drug Screening" and agree to participate in the Gilmer County Schools Drug Screening Program.

RETENTION FOR ATHLETIC PURPOSES

A student will not be retained in any grade for athletic purposes.

OBTAINING/MAINTAINING a VALID GEORGIA DRIVER'S LICENSE or LEARNER'S PERMIT/TAADRA

Georgia's Teenage and Adult Driver Responsibility Act (TAADRA) requires local school systems to certify that a student is eligible to obtain a Georgia driver's license or learner's permit. Signed into law on April 16, 2015, Senate Bill 100 made significant changes to TAADRA. Effective July 1, 2015, schools have to certify that a student is "enrolled in and not under expulsion" from a public or private school" to be eligible for a driver's license or learner's permit. Gilmer High School will use the Certificate of School Enrollment form to certify that a student is eligible for a driver's license or learner's permit.

More information on TAADRA in the TAADRA Implementation Guidelines can be obtained by visiting the Georgia Department of Education's website at www.gadoe.org.

OBTAINING/MAINTAINING A VALID GEORGIA WORK PERMIT

Current State Law (§ 39-2-11) requires that a student younger than the age of 16 who is seeking employment must obtain a signed Work Permit (officially called an "*Employment Certificate for Minors*") from the Gilmer County Schools website at www.gilmerschools.com. The work permit purposely imposes set limits on daily work hours and the amount of weekly work hours in an attempt to promote good school attendance and student achievement.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

A Student Assistance Program is available for students who may be experiencing problems both academic and otherwise. See your counselor for information.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST) /Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Each school in the Gilmer County School System has a Student Support Team (SST). The purpose of this team of professionals is to recommend effective instructional strategies and interventions for students whose data indicates that they are not meeting grade level academic standards and/or behavioral expectations.

Students can be referred to the Student Support Team (SST) by teachers based on Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) reading and/or math scores, parents or other instructional staff. A systemic, collaborative problem-solving process is used to generate recommendations that are targeted to the student's learning or behavior concern. These recommendations, which include a specific academic and/or behavior plan, are documented in a Gilmer County Response to Intervention (RTI) plan and provided to the student's teacher(s) and/or others to implement with the student. A team made up of teachers, school administration and parents, then meets periodically to review the student's progress monitoring data and determine the need for continuing, modifying or concluding the intervention (e.g., increase time, additional supports).

MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) is the name of the tiered prevention framework that provides a school-wide, multi-level prevention system, integrates assessment, reduces behavior difficulties and maximizes student achievement. This framework is similar to RTI in that students at risk for poor learning outcomes are identified, progress for those students is monitored closely, evidence-based interventions are utilized and adjusted based on student responsiveness.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Students in an Elementary School setting can be provided after school care at minimal cost from the end of school until 5:30 PM on days when school is in session. After school children are supervised in a safe and caring environment with a minimum of structure that allows for individual and social growth. Children engage in many activities including study time, physical recreation, art, music, computers and sports. Daily snacks are provided. Fees are paid in advance with an extra charge for drop-ins or late pick up.

COUNSELING

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL

Counselors provide students with a variety of services:

- Counseling personal concerns
- Information giving
- Academic advisement

HIGH SCHOOL

Counselors provide students with a variety of services:

- Counseling personal concerns
- Information giving
- Academic advisement
- Interpretation of test results
- Career/College guidance
- Financial aid and scholarship information
- Career guidance
- Classroom counseling
- Group counseling

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

School bus discipline and school bus safety is intertwined and inseparable. Students must properly ride the bus to ensure everyone's safety including other students, motorists, and pedestrians. Conduct that is disruptive or distracting will not be tolerated. All bus safety rules apply to regular bus routes, bus stops, field trips, and athletic trips. Positive behavior interventions will be implemented on all Gilmer County school busses. Bus acknowledgements will be given to students with appropriate bus behavior.

DISRUPTIONS AND UNLAWFUL BEHAVIOR

Georgia Code § 20-2-1181 states it is unlawful for a person to disrupt or interfere with the operation of a school bus or designated bus stop. Any person violating this Code is guilty of a misdemeanor of a "high and aggravated nature." Georgia Codes § 16-5-20, §16-5-23 and § 16-5-23.1 further protect school employees on buses and/or at school bus stops against behavior legally defined as "simple assault" and "simple battery," stating that people found guilty of violating these codes will be punished for misdemeanors of a "high and aggravated nature."

SAFETY RULES AT THE BUS STOP

- Take the shortest, safest route to the bus stop.
- Be at the bus stop five minutes before time for the bus to arrive.

- Walk on the left shoulder of the road facing traffic unless there are sidewalks. Wear light or brightly colored clothing.
- Wait a safe distance from the road, but be prepared to quickly board the bus. Respect the property of other people.
- Refrain from pushing, fighting, or any other unsafe activity at the bus stop.
- Report disturbances immediately to school administration for resolution.

SAFETY RULES FOR ENTERING AND EXITING THE BUS

- Be sure all traffic has stopped both ways before crossing the road. (Stop, Look, Listen) Walk 10-12 feet in front of the bus to stay in the driver's view when crossing the road. Make eye contact with driver so driver can motion to student when to cross the road.
- Never cross the road behind a school bus.
- Stop at the centerline of the road and look both ways before crossing after exiting the bus. Make eye contact with driver so driver can motion to student when to cross the road.
- Do not linger in the "Danger Zone". (The "Danger Zone" is a twelve-foot parameter around the bus where most accidents happen.)
- Do not go back for items dropped in the "Danger Zone". Leave the item. Get the driver's attention before retrieving anything!
- Never stop in the "Danger Zone" to get mail from the mailbox.
- Secure loose items such as toys, key chains, and drawstrings to avoid hanging them on the bus, especially the handrail.
- Students will not be allowed to enter or leave a bus at any place other than at the student's usual bus stop or school unless authorized by the principal or his/her designee.
- Students may not ride a different bus unless they present to the driver a note from the parent that has been approved by the principal, assistant principal or his/her designee.
- Students who must change buses at any school must follow the rules of that school.

SAFETY RULES ON THE SCHOOL BUS

- Observe the same conduct as in the classroom. Never throw objects in or out of the bus.
- Remain seated and keep head and hands inside the bus.
- Be courteous and avoid the use of profane or abusive language. Show proper respect to the bus driver and follow all directions. Do not eat or drink on the bus.
- Never bring objectionable or dangerous objects such as weapons, glass, skateboards, or large projects on the bus. Cell phones and/or other electronic equipment that cause distractions are not allowed on the bus.
- Refrain from unnecessary noise. Remain quiet at railroad crossings.
- Do not tamper with safety equipment including crossing gate, emergency doors, windows or hatches. Be seated quickly and remain seated until arriving at destination.
- Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices with or without headphones or earbuds during the loading or unloading process. Students should keep electronic equipment packed away when preparing to board and when getting off the bus. Use of electronic devices while onboard the bus with headphones or earbuds is permitted as long as it does not interfere with the driver's operation of the school bus or interfere with the school bus communications equipment. In order to hear driver instructions, students are allowed to use one headphone or earbud while on the bus.
- Food/eating on buses: Students/adults on field trips or participating in extra-curricular /athletic events are allowed to eat on buses only with prior approval from the school administrator.
- Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

TRANSPORTING PROJECTS AND PROHIBITED ITEMS

Occasionally projects and/or items are transported to and from school. These items may include woodworking projects, Science/Social Studies project, athletic equipment and band instruments. The final decision will be made by conversation with the driver and school administrator. The following guidelines must be followed to ensure the safety of students during a possible evacuation and the comfort and well-being of all students:

- Only projects small enough to hold in student's lap, without interfering with the safety or comfort of others in the seat, may be transported.
- Items, including large display boards, should not exceed 18"x24" and must not contain sharp edges, corners or sharp displayed objects.
- Glass items, animals, balloons, flowers, chemicals, flammable materials or other hazardous items are **prohibited and will not be transported**.
- Band instruments small enough to hold in student's lap, without interfering with the safety or comfort of others in the seat, may be transported.
- No item shall be stored in the aisle, driver's compartment or behind the driver's seat.
- No items should be placed/stored in front of the emergency exits (especially ice coolers).
- Skateboards, scooters and other similar objects are **prohibited** on the bus.
- Students are allowed to bring food items on the bus if the items are in the form of class assignments (ex: Edible Cell or other class project involving food), Weekend Snack Packs or other allowable item with Principal approval. These items are not to be consumed on the bus.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

- Parents are responsible for providing transportation for students suspended from riding the bus.
- Bus drivers are in complete charge at all times and are authorized to assign seats and to report misbehavior to the school administration. School administrators or his/her designees are responsible for disciplining students for bus misbehavior.
- Conversation with the bus driver or behavior distracting the bus driver by students during loading and unloading of buses should be avoided. During this critical time complete concentration by the bus driver is required.
- Parents with concerns or complaints that need to be addressed by the bus driver should schedule a conference with the bus driver through the school. Under no circumstances should parents distract the bus driver by boarding the bus or complaining at the bus stop. Student safety must be top priority during this time.
- Student conduct in school and on school buses may be videotaped with surveillance equipment. This equipment is installed for the purpose of promoting a safe environment for students, personnel, passengers and drivers.
- Any action or disturbance that endangers the well-being of any student will be handled in accordance with the Gilmer County Schools Code of Conduct for Students.
- Parents are responsible for communicating to their child their expectation of a daily routine for the child to follow after he/she exits the bus to ensure that the child will arrive home safely.
- Additionally, parents should establish an emergency plan with their child in case the parent is unable to be at the bus stop or at home when the child exits the bus. For example, in the event of an emergency, one option would be to coordinate a plan with a trusted neighbor, who is always home, for your child to walk to their home and then call you.
- Students in kindergarten through fourth grade will only be transported back to school under extenuating circumstances relative to potential safety issues when brought to the bus driver's or school's attention by the student or his/her parent/guardian. Parents will be responsible for supervision fees assessed by the school in this regard.

TEXTING/CELLPHONE USE WHILE DRIVING PROHIBITED

Effective July 1, 2010 drivers under 18 years of age with an instruction permit or Class D license are prohibited by Georgia law, O.C.G.A. 40-6-241.1 to use a wireless communication device while driving a motor vehicle.

Gilmer County Schools, will assess penalties to student drivers when they are observed using a wireless communication device on the roadways leading into or surrounding the campus in order to provide for a safe and secure environment for teaching and learning. This does not include use of a device while parked in a parking space.

As used in the O.C.G.A 40-6-241.1, the term:

(1) "Engage in a wireless communication" means talking, writing, sending, or reading a text-based communication, or listening on a wireless telecommunications device.

Effective July 1, 2018 – O.C.G.A. 40-6-241.2 states:

(a) As used in this Code section, the term "wireless telecommunications device" means a cellular telephone, a text messaging device, a personal digital assistant, a stand-alone computer, or any other substantially similar wireless device that is used to initiate or receive a wireless communication with another person. It does not include citizens band radios, citizens band radio hybrids, commercial two-way radio communication devices, subscription-based emergency communications, in-vehicle security, navigation devices, and remote diagnostics systems, or amateur or ham radio devices.

(b)(1) No person who is 18 years of age or older or who has a Class C license shall operate a motor vehicle on any public road or highway of this state while using a wireless telecommunications device to write, send, or read any text-based communication, including but not limited to a text message, instant message, e-mail, or Internet data.

(2) No person shall operate a commercial motor vehicle on any public road or highway of this state while:

(A) Holding a wireless telecommunications device to conduct a voice communication;

(B) Using more than a single button on a wireless telecommunications device to initiate or terminate a voice communication; or

(C) Reaching for a wireless telecommunications device in such a manner that requires the driver to maneuver so that he or she is no longer in a seated driving position properly restrained by a safety belt.

(c) The provisions of this Code section shall not apply to:

(1) A person reporting a traffic accident, medical emergency, fire, serious road hazard, or a situation in which the person reasonably believes a person's health or safety is in immediate jeopardy;

(2) A person reporting the perpetration or potential perpetration of a crime;

(3) A public utility employee or contractor acting within the scope of his or her employment when responding to a public utility emergency;

(4) A law enforcement officer, firefighter, emergency medical services personnel, ambulance driver, or other similarly employed public safety-first responder during the performance of his or her official duties; or

(5) A person engaging in wireless communication while in a motor vehicle which is lawfully parked.

(d) Any conviction for a violation of the provisions of this Code section shall be a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of $150.00. The provisions of Chapter 11 of Title 17 and any other provision of law to the contrary notwithstanding, the costs of such prosecution shall not be taxed nor shall any additional penalty, fee, or surcharge to a fine for such offense be assessed against a person for conviction thereof. The court imposing such fine shall forward a record of the disposition to the Department of Driver Services. Any violation of this Code section shall constitute a separate offense.

FORMS

AFFIDAVIT OF RELIGIOUS OBJECTION TO IMMUNIZATION

CHROMEBOOK PROCEDURES - PARENTS

Georgia Department of Public Health

AFFIDAVIT OF RELIGIOUS OBJECTION TO IMMUNIZATION

_____(name of parent or guardian) personally appeared before the undersigned notary public and swore or affirmed as follows:

1. I am the parent or legal guardian of_____(name of minor child), born on_____(date of birth).
2. I understand that the Georgia Department of Public Health requires children to obtain vaccinations against the following diseases before being admitted to a child care facility or school: diphtheria; Hemophilus influenzae type B (not required on or after the fifth birthday); hepatitis A; hepatitis B; measles; meningitis; mumps; pertussis (whooping cough); pneumococcal disease (not required on or after the fifth birthday); poliomyelitis; rubella (German measles); tetanus; and varicella (chickenpox).
3. I understand that the Georgia Department of Public Health has determined:
   a. that the required vaccinations are necessary to prevent the spread of dangerous diseases among the children and people of this State;
   b. that the required vaccinations are safe;
   c. that a child who does not receive the required vaccinations is at risk of contracting those diseases; and
   d. that a child who does not receive the required vaccinations is at risk of spreading these diseases to me, to other children in the child care facility or school, and to other persons.
4. I sincerely affirm that vaccination is contrary to my religious beliefs, and that my objections to vaccination are not based solely on grounds of personal philosophy or inconvenience.
5. I understand that, notwithstanding my religious objections, my child may be excluded from child care facilities or schools during an epidemic or threatened epidemic of any disease preventable by a vaccination required by the Georgia Department of Public Health, and that my child may be required to receive a vaccination in the event that such a disease is in epidemic stages, as provided in Georgia Code Section 31-12-3 and DPH Rule 511-9-1-.03(2)(d).

This_____day of,_____.

_____
Parent or Legal Guardian

Sworn and subscribed before me
this_____day of_____,_____.

_____
Notary Public
My commission expires_____.

Form 2208
Revised June 2019

CHROMEBOOK PROCEDURES - PARENTS

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Gilmer County Schools is excited to announce that we will be participating in a 1:1 Chromebook Initiative. For the 2023-2024 school year this program will be for students in grades 1-12. What this means for your child, is that they will now have access to their own, school issued, device throughout the school day. Students in grades 6-12 will take devices home to assist with homework, projects, etc. Students in grades 1-5 will have daily access at school and some at home access.

While we know that some students do not have access to Wifi at home, there are many offline assignments that students can still complete. In addition, by having their own device, students can communicate with their teachers and complete work when they are absent. Students will not be allowed to bring their own laptop/tablet devices if you choose to not allow your child to have a school issued device. This is because all devices are programmed for school use and testing platforms. In addition, if you choose for your child to not be issued a Chromebook, we cannot guarantee that one will always be available for your child to use at school.

We understand there may be some concern with accepting a school issued device because students are held responsible for damages. However, students are currently held responsible if they damage a Chromebook during the school day. If damages do occur, we will offer repair costs at a discounted price if a student has a school issued device. Additionally, students will be issued a protective sleeve or cases depending on grade level to add additional protection to the Chromebook as it is carried back and forth between home and school.

Students will be checked out a Chromebook at the beginning of the school year. At the end of the year, students will check in their Chromebook, and then will be reissued the same Chromebook at the start of school in August.

If you do not want your child to be issued a Chromebook, please sign and return this letter to your child's school.

If you have any questions about the 1:1 initiative, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian Ridley
Superintendent

I do not want my child, _____, to be issued a Chromebook. I understand this may limit his/her availability to technology during the school day.

_____ (Parent Signature)