2026-2027

Farnsworth
Middle School



Student/Parent
HANDBOOK

Hiawatha | Mohawk | Seneca | Tawasentha

Guilderland
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Welcome
to the new school year

The Alton U. Farnsworth Middle School (FMS) Student/Parent Handbook contains information about our school and the policies and procedures you and your child will need to be familiar with for a successful school year. In it you will find information pertaining to:

- Your child's grades and interim reports
- Conferences with your child's teachers
- The attendance policy
- FMS Code of Conduct
- And much more!

The information contained in this handbook is important. We ask that you please read it with your child, assisting him/her with understanding its contents. If you have any further questions about anything contained in this handbook, please contact the Building Principal or one of our House Principals at their telephone extensions, or by email found on page 4.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are an effective means of communication between the home and the school. These conferences provide an opportunity for open communication regarding student progress, instructional programs, goals and objectives, and administrative procedures. (BOE Policy 4714) Parents may initiate a conference by calling the house office at any point in the year and making an appointment with the house secretary. When a parent requests a conference with a teacher, the teacher will make every effort to arrange a mutually convenient time. Such conferences will be planned around the teacher's schedule so as not to interfere with class time. If a parent cannot attend a scheduled conference, he/she should notify the school as far in advance as possible so that another conference time may be arranged.

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Students can also obtain school information by visiting the Guilderland Central School District website at www.guilderlandschools.org. The site includes information on upcoming activities, class schedules, sports schedules, school news, academic achievements, policy information and a school calendar.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Directory of School Staff

The Guilderland Board of Education is committed to maintaining a continuing public information program. You will be able to reach any of the following individuals during school business hours (8:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.) by dialing 456-6010 and then, at the prompt, the desired extension. Staff can also be accessed through e-mail by using last name, first initial@guilderlandlandschools.net (e.g., lasterm@guilderlandschools.net). *(BOE policy 1100)*

Farnsworth Middle School **(518) 456-6010**

Building Principal, *Michael Laster* Ext. 2010

HOUSE PRINCIPALS

Hiawatha 6-8: *Ryan St. John* Ext. 2041

Seneca 6-8: *Kelly Willetts* Ext. 2060

Tawasentha 7-8: *Kelly Willetts* Ext. 2060

Tawasentha 6: *Michael Laster* Ext. 2010

Mohawk 6-8: *Ryan St. John* Ext. 2041

CSP Classrooms: *Michael Laster* Ext. 2010

HOUSE SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Hiawatha 6-8, Mohawk 6 C&D:
Christopher Labattaglia Ext. 2054

Seneca 6-8, Mohawk 8B:
Chris Jager Ext. 2038

Tawasentha 6-8, CSP:
Danielle Heigel Ext. 2036

Whom do I contact about...?

Athletics: *Len Kies* (518) 861-8591, Ext. 1400

Bus Schedule:
Transportation (518) 861-6434, Ext. 1

COURSES - CURRICULA

FACS: *Dr. Beverly Bisnett-Jenks* Ext. 2089

English/Reading/Social Studies:
Roy Dumar Ext. 2089

Physical Education/Health:
Len Kies Ext. 1400

World Languages/Cultures & ENL:
Lauren Anderson Ext. 2508

Math/Science/Technology:
Beverly Bisnett-Jenks Ext. 2089

Fine Arts: *Robert Winans* Ext. 2033

Cafetorium/Meal Information:
Renee Heller (518) 456-6200, Ext. 0110

Custodial Supervisors:
Josh Hughes and April Porter Ext. 2099

Enrichment/Gifted Programming:
Roy Dumar Ext. 2089

Special Education Services:
Audrey Douglas and Mehgan Rivers Ext. 2051

School Nurses: *Beth Ford and Angela Salavantis* Ext. 2015/2017

Use of Building: *Hanna Starr* Ext. 2010

Instruction & Instructional Resources

District Mission Statement

Guilderland Central School District's mission is to inspire all students to be active lifelong learners, able to achieve their highest potential in a demanding and ever-changing global community.

District Educational Philosophy

The Board of Education believes that the Guilderland Central School District is dedicated to the service of its students, their families and the entire community. To this end we will be attentive and responsive to the diverse needs of all. By serving our students we mean to empower them for success and effectiveness both now and throughout their lives. Our purposes for students include:

- Developing and cultivating the full range of human intelligences and capabilities
- Instilling the habits of mind and dispositions of character needed to use understanding wisely and humanely
- Developing the skills necessary to live, work and succeed in our own democratic society and an ever-changing community
- Encouraging the development of each individual's unique expression while fostering the development of lifelong respect for others

Our aim is to ensure that each student becomes a self-initiating, lifelong learner and a contributing, productive member of society.

In order to achieve this, we require our schools to encourage and foster a learning environment where students work alone and with others to evaluate, construct, and generate knowledge. Students are supported in taking risks and thinking independently.

Staff members are expected to direct their energies to doing what is necessary to meet our students' needs. The district actively supports employee efforts to improve their professional practice aimed at learning and implementing effective ways in which to meet students' needs.

Recognizing that the whole community is affected by its schools, the Board of Education encourages participation and conversations about what students are learning, what schools and families are seeking to do, and what the community needs. We will operate in an arena of collaboration and partnership. Our actions and relationships will foster mutual respect, trust, and support. We will make decisions based on what we believe is good and on what we know is effective in enhancing the full range of human development. *(BOE policy 1000)*

Farnsworth Middle School Philosophy

Farnsworth Middle School, a New York State School to Watch, is an exciting learning community: thoughtful, stimulating, reflective, engaging and engaged. The staff balances challenging curriculum goals with its understanding of the unique intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs of 11-14 year olds. In partnership with families and community, we support and nurture students in their development of a love for learning, strong habits of the mind and body, a commitment to high academic standards, an appreciation for the arts, an understanding of democratic principles, respect for self and others, and responsibility for their actions.

Farnsworth Middle School students successfully make the transition from elementary to high school. All students use their minds well, think critically and creatively, make informed and reasoned judgments, produce and invent, critique and analyze, develop personal responsibility and concern for others, and move toward greater independence as learners.

Statement Of Nondiscrimination/ Anti Harassment

It is the policy of the Guilderland Central School District not to permit discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, sexual orientation or disability in the district's educational programs, activities or employment.

Harassment may take the form of comments, name-calling, jokes, stalking, perpetuating rumors or gossip, offensive gestures or language, assault or any other behavior that is designed to annoy, intimidate or cause fear.

Bullying and/or hazing of students and staff are prohibited behaviors and will not be tolerated at Farnsworth Middle School.

New York's Dignity for All Students Act and Guilderland Central School District's policy #5010 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, gender, creed, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, military status or marital status and will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination or harassment. Any parent, student or district employee who believes they have been discriminated against based upon race, color, gender, creed, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, military status or marital status should contact one of the district's Dignity Act Coordinators at (518) 456-6200 with extension below:

- District-wide Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction:
  Jacqulyn Dignum Ext. 0118
- Building Principal:
  Michael Laster Ext. 2010
- House Principals:
  Ryan St. John and Ext. 2041
  Kelly Willetts Ext. 2060

Instruction

The development and maintenance of optimal educational programs are the primary functions of the Guilderland Board of Education. *(BOE Policy 4000)*

Daily Schedule

Walkers and students arriving before 8:35 a.m. must report directly to the cafetorium unless a pre-arranged meeting is in place. Please be aware the building does not officially open until 7:45 a.m.; this is when supervision begins.

Buses unload: 8:35 a.m.

Students must be in homeroom: 8:45 a.m.

Daily dismissal to buses: 3:25 p.m.

Mon, Tues, Thurs **late bus dismissal** to buses: 4:05 p.m.

Breakfast Program 7:45-9:00 a.m.

Upon arrival at school, students will be offered the option of eating breakfast. Any student arriving at 8:45 a.m. in need of breakfast should report to homeroom first before going to the cafetorium. Students will be dismissed from the cafetorium at 8:35 a.m. in order to

arrive at their homeroom by 8:45 a.m. All food and beverages must be consumed in the cafetorium.

Activity Period 3:25-4:05 p.m.

Activity period at FMS is on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Activity periods are an extension of the school day. Students may be required to stay for help with schoolwork, detention, or other extensions of the school program. Students may stay for enrichment with teachers, extra help, participation in clubs and intramural activities, etc. Students may only stay for activity period as part of a supervised program. Only students staying for one of these activities may ride the 4:05 p.m. late bus. Students and parents are encouraged to be clear about the student's plan for dismissal prior to arrival at school. Student access to the phone will be limited to emergency situations only.

Attendance

Attendance is a critical factor in school success for our students. Consistent school attendance, academic success and school completion are positively related. School attendance is both a right and a responsibility in New York State. Children have the right to attend school between the ages of 5 and 21, and are mandated to attend between the ages of 6 and 16. Parents are expected to make sure that their children attend school on a regular basis. *(BOE Policy 5100)*

It is each student's basic responsibility as a member of the school community to be on time and attend all classes. To report a child's absence from school, please call or email your child's house office secretary. Daily telephone calls will be made to parents or guardians to report unexcused absences.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

The following reasons for student absences from school are recognized as excused:

- Personal illness
- Illness or death in the family
- Impassable roads or weather making travel unsafe
- Religious observance
- Medical appointment
- Approved school-sponsored trips
- Quarantine
- Required court appearances

Any other absence is considered unexcused. Students returning to school following an absence should submit a written excuse stating the reason(s) for his or her absence to the House Principal.

The district will support and encourage a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. Students with unexcused absences will be disciplined according to the provisions set forth in the district's Code of Conduct.

Late Arrivals

Students who arrive late must enter through the front door near the reception area and the Main Office and immediately sign in at their House Office.

Student Dismissal Precautions

In order to ensure students' safety, school officials maintain a list of individuals who are authorized to obtain the release of students in attendance at the school. No student may be released to the custody of any individual who is not the parent or guardian of the student, unless the individual's name appears on that

list. We encourage all parents to update their child's student profile on our parent portal.

Certified copies of any court orders or divorce decrees provided by the custodial parent, which restrict a parent's ability to seek the release of his or her child, shall be maintained in district offices.

Early Release

Early release should be kept to a minimum as it disrupts the educational process. Early release of students should be requested in writing by the parent and submitted to the House Principal. If anyone seeks the release from school of a student, he/she must report to the reception area located next to the Main Office on the first floor and present satisfactory identification to the receptionist. If the person seeking the release of a child exhibits to the school official an out-of-state custody order, the Building Principal or the Building Principal's designee will be called.

Learning Center

Farnsworth students receive instruction in the research process through various units in the curriculum. They are led by certified library media specialists who teach students how to think critically when interacting with information in varying formats.

The Learning Center is open every school day and is equipped with books, magazines, Internet access, online databases, and other educational resources. Students may come to the Learning Center during class, Access, or activity period with a pass from a teacher.

Materials in the library circulate for a specific period of time, generally three weeks. All students wishing to borrow materials must check them out at the library desk.

Students are expected to be responsible and courteous of the needs of others and return library materials on time. Lost or damaged materials must be replaced at the expense of the borrower.

Multimedia Tools In The Classroom

Increasingly, non-print media—including television, music video, videotape, film, radio, compact disc, and hypertext for personal computers—have become primary sources of information and recreation, as well as emotional and artistic experiences for Americans.

Today's children come to school from homes and communities which provide them with a wide exposure to non-print media. It is crucial that teachers draw upon this background both to recognize their students' knowledge and to develop their students' critical thinking about non-print media.

Students must develop the knowledge, critical awareness, and technical skills to become participants in, creators of, thinkers about, and commentators on the non-print media that are so pervasive an influence on their lives. This means that teachers may sometimes use potentially controversial materials to help students confront issues such as stereotyping, propagandizing, and editorializing in the media. As educators, we are aware of and sensitive to the needs and perceptions of middle school-aged students. These materials are never selected to expose students to gratuitous violence or sexuality. Instead, such materials may be chosen to allow students to discover that non-print media works are various constructions of reality, and that they may have commercial, ideological, and value-laden messages.

Educators have included the study of film and video in their classrooms for decades. The school district affirms that the purpose of including these materials is to:

- Support the development of students' print literacy and appreciation of print literature by building on students' informally acquired media literacy skills
- Study artistic and informative works in their own right
- Deepen students' abilities to understand and to critically analyze the powerful non-print media sources of their daily information and entertainment

Film or video used for instructional purposes has to meet specific selection criteria. Parents will be notified if potential controversy related to language, violence, drug and alcohol abuse or sexual issues exist. Parents will also receive notification of all health videos and units before they are shown. *(BOE Policy 4512)*

Use Of School Computers And Internet

The Guilderland Board of Education considers computers to be a valuable tool for education, and encourages the use of computers and computer-related technology in classrooms.

Computer use is an integral part of the curriculum and the use of software applications, online databases, bulletin boards and electronic mail significantly enhance a student's educational experience.

To this end, the Board extends the privilege of using computers to access the Internet to help perform academic work, to explore educational topics, to conduct research projects, and to contact others in the educational world. The privilege of using the computers in the school may be revoked at any time if a student fails to comply with the Board's policy and regulations. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in the event of violations of this policy. *(BOE Policy 4510.2)*

GCSD Engaged Learning Initiative (ELI) through 1:1 Chromebook Model

The Engaged Learning Initiative (ELI) aligns with the district's vision and mission by providing students in grades 5-12 with regular, equitable access to digital learning tools in school and at home.

Students will receive a Chromebook for in-school and at-home use at the start of every school year. Students will be expected to bring their fully charged Chromebooks to school every day and to use them for all computer-based school assignments. There is no fee to families unless a student's Chromebook is damaged, lost or stolen -- the same policy as for textbooks. For full information on the initiative, please refer to the Educational Technology Department's website, accessible through the district website.

Acceptable Use Policy

An acceptable use policy for student use of the district's computer network is sent home annually. It describes the student's access to the network and expectations for acceptable use. Parents are expected to review this agreement with their child. Failure to abide by these regulations may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension from school and/or revocation of system access and related privileges.

Staff and students are expected to follow these guidelines when using computers:

- School computers may only be used to help perform academic work, explore educational topics, conduct research projects or contact others for educational purposes.
- When using school computers, students and staff will be expected to take reasonable care of school equipment and materials.
- Students and staff are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner while using school computers and the Internet. They should be polite to Internet users and should act within the laws of New York State and the U.S.
- No purchase may be made via a computer owned by the school, or through one of the school's Internet accounts.
- Students will be supervised when they access the Internet. The school will take every reasonable precaution to ensure that a student will not access objectionable materials. Students will be instructed to notify a teacher immediately if they accidentally access something objectionable from a school computer.
- Students will be told not to provide personal information or agree to meet strangers that they meet on the Internet. Students should notify a teacher if someone on the Internet requests personal information or asks to meet with them.
- In accordance with the District's "opt-out" policy for the use of student directory information, web page documents on the Internet may include a student's full name, grade level, photograph, art work, academic interest, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, terms of school attendance and graduation, awards received, etc. unless the district has been notified in writing not to publish this information in any given school year.
- Information stored on school computer equipment is not private and may be viewed or traced by authorized personnel.

Staff and students must understand that if they violate these rules, their computer privileges may be suspended. Violations of these guidelines will result in a referral to school administration for further disciplinary action.

District Responsibilities

While the district uses technological and manual means to regulate access and information on the school computer network, parents should understand that these methods do not provide a fool-proof means of enforcing the provisions of the district's policy and regulations.

The district makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for the access being provided. Further, the district assumes no responsibility for the quality, availability, accuracy, nature or reliability of the service and/or information provided. Use of the district's computer network and the Internet is performed at the user's own risk. Each user is responsible for verifying the integrity and authenticity of the information that is used and provided.

The district will not be responsible for any damages suffered by any user, including but not limited to, loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or the errors or omissions of any user. The district will also not be responsible for the unauthorized financial obligations resulting from the use or

access to the district's computer network or the Internet. *(BOE Policy 4510.2)*

Internet Safety

The Guilderland Central School District is committed to safeguarding children's access to the Internet and World Wide Web on district computers. Although Guilderland Central School District cannot totally guarantee the effectiveness of selected filtering and blocking technology, the district will use such measures that block or filter Internet access to visual depictions that are obscene or otherwise harmful to minors, as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act. In addition, Internet safety is part of the sixth grade technology program.

Student E-mail Accounts

All middle school students are issued a secure district e-mail account through the Google Apps for Education service. This account is intended for instructional purposes. Students may only send messages to and receive messages from other GCSD students and staff members.

District Website

Internet access in the Guilderland Central School District provides an opportunity for students, staff, parents, and the community to share information in a very unique way. The district's website provides information to the community about school curriculum, instruction, school-related activities, and other general information relating to our schools and our district's mission. Internet access for the creation of web pages is provided by the district Web Team through Capital Region BOCES.

Creators of web pages on the Guilderland Central School District's website need to familiarize themselves with, and adhere to, the district's published website guidelines in order to receive and retain authoring privileges on the district website or to have an independent website linked to the district website.

Students may create new web pages or modify existing web pages only as part of a classroom or club activity with the authorization of a designated staff member. The web pages may only be placed on the district web server with approval from the network administrator. *(BOE Policy 4510.2-R.2)*

School Ceremonies And Observances

The school district recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among the students. Therefore, activities in schools commemorating national holidays such as Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and President's Day are encouraged. Guilderland Central School District reminds students, faculty and administration of the variety of religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

Activities related to a religious holiday or theme will be planned to ensure that the activity is not devotional, and that students of all faiths can join without feeling that they are betraying their own beliefs.

Therefore, keep in mind the following:

- School and class plays shall be secular and nonsectarian in nature. Although school and class plays may have religious content, the purpose may not be to promote or endorse a specific religious belief.

- Although religious music may be played and/or sung to demonstrate the cultural significance of such art forms, the Guilderland Central School District will not permit such music to entirely dominate the district's music program or concerts.
- Program notes and illustrations of a religious nature shall not be included if the purpose or effect is to encourage students and community members to accept and/or follow such religious teachings.

Students shall be given the option to be excused from participating in those parts of a program involving a religious theme which conflicts with their own religious beliefs. If a parent or student has any questions regarding the use of religious music, artwork and/or symbols in a particular course/activity, the Building Principal should be contacted.

Assemblies

Student assemblies are seen as part of the overall educational process. School assemblies, at all instructional levels, are often held to provide recognition of student accomplishments by peers, parents and staff members. Assemblies will be appropriate to the educational experience, as defined by the Guilderland Central School District Board of Education, and reflect our school's educational mission.

Students are reminded of proper conduct at assemblies to ensure responsible audience participation:

- Take an assigned seat quietly
- Do not speak above a whisper, and then only when necessary
- Pay attention to the speaker/performer(s)
- All cell phones and wearable devices must remain in your locked locker from the start to the end of the school day
- Applaud only when appropriate

School Lockers And Locks

All students will be assigned a locker to secure their belongings. Students assigned lockers in Hiawatha, Mohawk and Tawasentha will need to use a free-hanging combination lock to secure their lockers. Students in Seneca will be assigned lockers with integrated locks (no need for free-hanging locks). Please note that school lockers are not the private property of students but the property of the school district and as such may be opened and subject to inspection from time to time by school officials (BOE policy 5330). For safety/security reasons, school officials may need to cut-off privately purchased locks to gain access.

- Students are responsible for the contents of their hallway and PE lockers and are required to use a lock at all times. If they do not lock up their belongings and valuables, they run the risk of theft.
- The school is not responsible for items that are lost or stolen.
- Students should keep all valuables in a locked locker.
- Students should not share lock combinations with other students.

Students will need to bring in a combination lock for their Homeroom and PE Lockers. Homeroom teachers will keep the combination on file to help students who might forget the combination.

Physical Education

GCSD believes that the physical education program should:

- Aid the development of a student's mind by encouraging the development of a healthy body
- Encourage student participation in appropriate physical activity while in school and to teach the skills of those activities so that they will carry over to activities throughout their lifetime
- Increase appreciation of physical fitness and its importance in regard to good health
- Impress upon students the importance of integrating one's mind, body, and attitude in preparing to face the challenges life presents
- Instill self-respect, self-discipline, and the value of cooperation and teamwork which are essential elements of good citizenship

With these objectives in mind, the P.E. staff works with administrators to develop a physical education program that develops each student's flexibility, agility, coordination, strength, and endurance incorporating a progression of skills and activities from the simple to the more complex. This program is flexible enough to accept each student with his/her own pattern of growth and development, and includes activities that ensure both individual and group development throughout the student's school years.

Every student who attends school must take part in a physical education program. If a student requires a special or adaptive physical education program, he/ she should notify the school counselor and P.E. teacher as soon as possible. A note from the student's physician may also be required. *(BOE Policy 4316)*

If a student must be excused from P.E. classes for less than a week either due to minor injuries or upon returning to school following an illness, the student must deliver a note from the parent to the physical education teacher.

If a student must be excused from P.E. For more than a week, that student must deliver a note from his/her physician to the school nurse.

Proper Attire for PE Class

Students are expected to dress appropriately in order to participate in physical education classes. All students are required to wear sneakers for safety and performance reasons.

Music

Performing Music Ensembles

In 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, all students at FMS take general music every other day for one semester and receive a grade at the end of the semester. FMS offers grade level and co-curricular ensembles in band, chorus, and orchestra. All students (regardless of previous experience) are invited to participate in the program in performing ensembles. Ensembles meet as a class every other day during normal school hours and students are graded on achievement in lessons and rehearsals.

The music directors will work to create and maintain a high level of performance, foster motivation to perform, and develop teamwork within the group. Students are expected to be engaged during rehearsals, practice their instrument and participate in concerts. Although evening concerts are beyond the school day, they are a vital component of the musical experience and a culminating event

that cannot be made up. A written excuse from a parent or legal guardian is required in the event that a student misses a performance for any reason. In the case of illness or family emergency, the parent should contact the director as soon as possible.

Instrumental Lessons/Private Lessons

All band and orchestra students receive a small group music lesson once a week, 40 minutes in length. The lesson meets on the same day each week but times may rotate. Music lessons are considered an excused absence from the student's regularly scheduled class. Students are responsible for making up missed classwork when they have a lesson.

Instrument Storage

Students may store their instruments in the band or orchestra room. The student's name should be clearly visible on the instrument case. Keep a record of the model number and serial number of the instrument. Many homeowner policies cover musical instruments in school. FMS is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

Commitment to the Ensemble

Students in performing music ensembles are making a commitment to the ensemble and other members of the team. The success of any organization is dependent upon the spirit, pride, leadership, teamwork, dedication, and cooperation of its members. While students all develop at different rates, students are encouraged to put forth their best efforts and honor their commitment for the school year.

School Counseling/Social Work Services

The Counseling Department recognizes the importance of each child's academic, social, and emotional needs as related to the developmental stages of student growth.

In partnership with our students, staff, families and community, we will empower students to become effective learners, achieve success in school and develop into contributing members of our diverse society.

Counseling/social work services are available to all students in grades 6-8.

Special Instructional Programs

Programs For Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities are entitled to receive, at public expense, special education, related services and/or supplementary aids and services as necessary to ensure a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, appropriate to meet their individual needs.

Each student identified as having a disability will have access to the full range of programs and services of this school district, including extracurricular programs and activities, which are available to all other students enrolled in the public schools of the district. *(BOE Policy 4321)*

Parents/students who desire further information on the program should contact Instructional Administrator for Special Education, Mehgan Rivers and/or CSE Chairperson Audrey Douglas. (Ext. 2051)

English As A New Language (ENL)

Students who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, have limited English proficiency will be more effective learners of both the language and the curriculum if they receive instruction in both their native language and English. The district will therefore make every effort to ensure that English as a New Language (ENL) students are provided with an appropriate transitional program of bilingual education or ENL. *(BOE Policy 4326)*

In some cases, students or courses may be graded using an S/U (Satisfactory /Unsatisfactory) scale. S/U grades are not included in a student's GPA. For ENL students, S/U grading may be appropriate for those at the Entering, Emerging, or Transitioning levels. This decision should be made on a course-by-course basis in collaboration with the classroom teacher, the ENL teacher, and administration. Regardless of whether S/U or numeric grades are used, if an ENL student is following a modified curriculum, this should be noted in the report card comments.

Parents/students who desire further information on the ENL program should contact the Instructional Administrator for World Languages & ENL, Lauren Anderson at (518) 456-6010, Ext. 2508.

Academic Intervention Services (AIS)

The district shall provide academic intervention services (AIS) to students who have been identified as being at risk of falling below the state learning standards in English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and/or science. Such services may include additional instruction services and/or student support services such as guidance, counseling, and study skills.

A student's eligibility for AIS will be determined based on his or her performance on state assessment examinations and/or in accordance with district assessment procedures. Students who participate in intervention programs will be eligible for these services until they are at least performing at grade level.

If a student is eligible for AIS, he/she will be assigned to an appropriately certified teacher qualified to provide instruction in the area for which academic intervention is required.

Student meetings with trained faculty will be scheduled during the school day, but all faculty members are available after school hours to provide a period of help, instruction and make-up work. *(BOE Policy 4325)*

When it has been determined that a student needs academic intervention services, the parents will be notified. The notice will outline the reason the student needs such services, the type of services to be provided and the consequences of not achieving the performance standards. In addition, the district will provide the parents with opportunities to consult with teachers and other professional staff, regular reports on the student's progress and information on ways to monitor and work with teachers to improve the student's performance.

Homebound Instruction

A student who is temporarily unable to attend school due to medical, emotional or disciplinary problems may be eligible to be instructed at home or in the hospital by an appropriately certified teacher.
(BOE Policy 4327)

The parent must notify the House Principal or school counselor if a student will be on an extended school absence. An application for home instruction can be obtained in the house offices. The application must be submitted through your child's school counselor and approved by the Building Principal or designee. If the inability to attend is due to a medical or emotional reason, the parent should obtain from the child's physician a written medical request for homebound instruction.

Where advanced notice is not possible, the parent should make every effort to obtain homework assignments until such a time as home/hospital instruction may begin.

As soon as possible after receiving notice of a prolonged absence, the district will arrange for home instruction for the time periods prescribed by law. A parent or another adult is expected to be present during all teaching sessions. Tutoring may be delivered at home or an alternative site, depending upon the availability of an adult.

Summer School

The Middle School summer school program is designed to help students who have failed two or more core academic classes during the school year. There is a strict attendance policy for all students who attend summer school. Students may not take week-long vacations during this block of time. For further information please contact your student's school counselor.

Grading And Promotion

Students at FMS are graded using a numerical grading system based on 0 to 100 point scale with 65% considered passing. Report card grades are based on tests, homework, classroom participation, projects and assignments. Guilderland Central School District uses a paperless report card system for all students, grades K-12. Report cards are no longer sent or mailed home; instead, parents can access and review their child's academic progress and report cards online via the district's Parent and Student Portal. We encourage parents to access, update and review our parent portal on a regular basis.

Grading System

The Guilderland Central School District places strong value on its students and their development as learners. The challenge of creating quality student assessment and reporting systems is to balance reporting needs with instructional purposes. No one method of student assessment and grade reporting serves all purposes well. Under this premise, it is the intent of this policy to have a multi-faceted, comprehensive reporting system. Our approach to student assessment and grade reporting is designed to:

- Communicate the achievements of students to parents and others
- Give information that students can use for self-evaluation
- Provide incentives for students to learn
- Identify students for different educational options
- Evaluate program effectiveness

The Board of Education realizes that classroom teachers have the primary responsibility to evaluate students and determine student grades and/or progress. Student assessment and grade reporting are intended to be positive tools that indicate to parents, the student, and teaching staff the level of performance and development in each class or subject area in which a student is enrolled. At all levels within our school system, teachers are expected to identify grade level or course expectations, the evidence that they will use to verify that learning has occurred, and what criteria they will use to judge that evidence. This approach should be communicated to students and parents.

The Board of Education recognizes that students are individuals with their own abilities and capabilities. The district will utilize a local grading or progress monitoring system appropriate to elementary, middle, and high school levels. Information will be reported in a variety of ways. In addition to formal report card grades or progress reports, feedback about student performance will include parent conferences, telephone and/or e-mail contacts, standardized test score results, etc. Student assessment and grade reporting should relate to learning criteria based on the following guidelines:

- **Product Criteria:** Focus on what students know and are able to do at that time, typically through examination scores, quiz results, overall assessments, or other culminating demonstrations of learning.
- **Process Criteria:** Student assessment and grade reporting should reflect not just the final results but also how students got

there. This takes into consideration overall effort, homework completion, and class participation.

- **Progress Criteria:** Considers how much students have gained from their learning experiences. *(BOE Policy 4710)*

Grading Policy - Secondary (Grades 6-12)

A. General Guidelines

The school district recognizes that no one method of student assessment and/or grade reporting system can be all encompassing. The information outlined below is a starting point for the multi-faceted, comprehensive reporting system, which is a critical element for students, parents, and staff in the overall educational process. Student assessment and grade reporting are tools to measure growth, progress, and the development of the student. One of several important components of student assessment and grading is the student's report card. Another key component for secondary students is the web-based parent portal that provides a secure access point for both parents and students to get current information about students' grades.

All teachers must provide students with a written grading policy within 10 days of the beginning of the course. This information is to be shared with parents as part of the first Open House/Parents' Night held in the fall. This information will help to clarify and solidify academic expectations. A teacher's grading policy should address process, product and performance measures in their assessment and grading of students.

- FMS & GHS have numerical grading systems based on 0 to 100-point scale; 65% is considered a passing grade.
- Teachers have the discretion to decide the weighting of various grade components; there may be some differences in grading based on the value assigned to each of the components, consistent with department and/or grade level expectations.
- A comment section relating to student in-class participation, attitude toward work, and thoroughness in preparation of homework assignments will appear in a separately marked column for the marking period as part of each report card. Additional feedback in the form of specific comments from teachers to their students and parents will be provided in this section.
- There will be a minimum of ten grades per quarter unless otherwise approved by the appropriate instructional supervisor. Teachers will update grades regularly, but will report at least five grades per five-week period of classroom instruction. Only classroom-based assessments (tests, quizzes, projects, presentations, reports, or long-term papers) may be used to report grades. However, various tests, quizzes, and projects used to determine the student's grades will be proportionally averaged so that the final mark is indicative of the student's achievement in relation to the objectives of the course.
- Each teacher will have a written grading policy to be shared with parents, students, and their immediate supervisor.

B. Grading System

Teachers assign numerical grades to each completed piece of student work, then calculate a numerical average for each quarterly marking period. There is no requirement that one system be used by all

teachers. Any system that is fair, explainable, and reflective of the accomplishment of the student is acceptable.

Whatever the approach for student grading and assessment, the practice will be communicated to students and parents.

A student's grades are reported on a quarterly basis using a 0-100 numerical scale with 65% considered passing.

Minimum Grades:
There may be some students who perform so poorly during the first marking period of a course that they cannot achieve success in the course at a later time regardless of how much they improve in subsequent marking periods. In an effort to provide students with a chance to pass the course without compromising the intent of the grading policy, a minimum grade alternative has been established as follows:

AT FMS:
A minimum of a 50% will be given to all students for the first three quarters in order to promote student academic success. This includes all four quarters for students taking 10-20 week courses.

C. Additional Grading Systems

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U)
In some cases, students/courses are graded with an S/U sequence. Some courses are designed to be graded on a S/U basis, and will be noted in the Curriculum Handbook. An S/U grade is not calculated in the student's GPA.

The designation of S/U for particular students in a course that is typically graded numerically would only be considered for extraordinary circumstances. If an S/U for a particular student is to be considered, the student shall obtain the approval of his or her parent, counselor, teacher, and Instructional Administrator. If the approval is granted, the appropriate grade (S/U) will be assigned following each marking period and on the final exam, if applicable.

Make up procedures and incomplete grades:

- Students who are absent must arrange to complete any missed work. Every effort should be made for students to catch up within one week of their return to school.

Students may receive an "I," (incomplete) as a grade if they have missed classes in the weeks just prior to the end of a marking period, thereby missing assignments or tests during that time. It is understood that students will need a reasonable amount of time to complete work missed at the end of a marking period without jeopardizing their performance during the new marking period.

If a student is absent just prior to the end of the marking period, and missed tests, quizzes and/or assignments, the teacher may record "I" (incomplete), with appropriate comments, on the report card for that quarter. Students should make up the work as soon as possible, but can have no more than five weeks to make up the work. Third quarter work must be made up within four weeks. Parents can view the completion of incomplete work and the conversion to an actual grade on the portal.

Assignments not completed may be averaged in as a failing grade to determine the average for the quarter, which must be reported to the parents by the end of five weeks.

Student Assessment in Other Disciplines - Art, Health, Family and Consumer Science/CTE, Technology Education, and General Music

Courses in these areas vary in length in the different grades. Some courses run for ten weeks, others for twenty weeks. Interim progress reports (generally at the midpoint) will be sent to students who are struggling in class. The teacher has the option to send Interim Progress Reports for those students who are doing well. Real-time progress may also be viewed by parents via the online portal. At the completion of a ten or twenty-week course, a final grade will be included on the report card.

Grading of New Entrants

If grades are available from the former school, these will be interpreted by the Principal or the Principal's designee to arrive at marking period ten-week grades compatible with our grading system.

If there are no grades available for the missing marking periods, no grades will be given for these missing marks until completion of the next full marking period. The grades of the available marking periods will be averaged and this average will constitute the grades for the missing period(s).

Alternative Assessments

The Guilderland Central School District recognizes and encourages the use of alternative assessment models, including those not involving alpha-numeric grades or summative assessments, and shall provide appropriate support to teachers developing and employing such models. Deviation from these regulations in a teacher's grading policy may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. However, this requires the teacher to submit an alternative assessment plan, which should include assessment criteria and evaluation methods. Approval must be obtained from the relevant instructional administrator by the designated department deadline.

D. Parent Communication

Communication to students and parents about student performance occurs on a regular basis. Report cards are available on the parent portal every ten weeks according to the schedule on the school calendar. Interim reports are available at five week intervals between report cards. These interim progress reports are only sent home upon parental request. Real-time progress may also be viewed using the online parent portal. The parent portal has weekly assignment grades posted for parent and student viewing. Interim progress report grades are calculated by averaging daily assignment totals and are made available every five weeks. Questions regarding grades should be addressed to individual teachers.

FMS Conferences: If parents or teachers wish to schedule a conference to discuss a student's progress, they should arrange the dates through the House Principal's office. Conferences may be scheduled with individual teachers or the full team. Team planning time will constitute the major portion of time devoted to teacher/parent conferences, especially when all team teachers are at the meeting.

Criteria for Substantial Fall-Off Determination: Each teacher will make contact with a parent whenever any substantial fall-off in a student's performance or achievement occurs. The purpose is to inform parents of the situation and to consult with them toward a cooperative action to remedy the situation.

Substantial fall-off in student performance is defined as follows:

- When the student's performance (class participation, homework, projects, assignments, quizzes, reports, etc.) has deteriorated to the extent that there will be a 10-point decline in the student's class average.
- When it appears that the student will receive a 65% or lower during the marking period in which the student enters a new grade or course.

These procedures will be followed in contacting parents to report substantial fall-off:

Teacher: The teacher should call the parent to discuss and offer to set up a conference if the parent desires. The teacher should also inform the student's counselor.

Counselor: The counselor will discuss the student's fall-off with the teacher to determine appropriate assistance that can be provided.

E. End of the Year Reporting

A minimum final grade of 65 is required to receive course credit. A grade of 64 is not to be used for a marking period or a final grade. *(BOE Policy 4710 R)*

Homework

Homework is recognized and encouraged as an extremely valuable activity and as an appropriate extension of classroom instruction. Homework provides excellent opportunities for developing good study habits, providing for individual differences and abilities, and encouraging self-initiative on the part of the student. *(BOE Policy 4730)*

Parents and the school share the responsibility for student learning. Student responsibilities for completing homework include:

- Listing all assignments in assignment notebook or on Chromebook
- Asking questions or requesting help if needed
- Gathering all needed materials for assignments
- Doing all assignments on time to the best of their ability
- Daily reviewing of the week's assignment schedule and setting time aside to do homework and projects
- Getting and completing assignments after an absence
- Understanding classroom procedures and policy
- Asking for clarification of the assignment if needed

Parents can assist their children with homework by:

- Providing a study area free of distractions and with good lighting
- Asking questions about the content of student homework
- Giving requested assistance, but letting the student do his or her own work
- Avoiding undue pressure
- Helping create a "homework habit" at the same time each night

The Guilderland Central School District believes that parental involvement in students' homework is essential to making homework an integral part of the educational program.

Parents should encourage and monitor homework assignments.

Acceleration

Guilderland Central Schools, through its Middle School program, seek to identify each student's unique talents. Students who have demonstrated exceptional abilities are provided with opportunities to move beyond the core curriculum through acceleration and at a faster pace than their peers. Students who are recommended to accelerate first and foremost demonstrate learning behaviors that support them as 8th graders taking High School Level courses. When forming a recommendation, the following criteria are considered:

- Access **and use resources without prompting**
- Attempt to do their best work
- Take advantage of opportunities to extend learning beyond what is delivered during class time
- **Follow directions independently**
- **Advocate for themselves and communicate with teachers frequently** and actively participate in classroom instruction
- Work consistently and demonstrate a desire to understand concepts rather than just finish assignments
- Able to learn from mistakes and change behavior based on experience
- Demonstrate mastery of mathematical (scientific) concepts **(test at an 85 or better)**
- **Demonstrate focus and time management skills that support their learning**

To determine whether a student is ready to take high school-level Algebra, four criteria are applied to a rubric. These include:

1. Quarterly grades for the first three quarters of Grade 7 Math
2. Algebraic Thinking Benchmark Assessment (Solving Unit Test)
3. The i-Ready diagnostic tool for Math is administered at the end of January/beginning of February (Mid-year Diagnostic)
4. Teacher Review of student learning behaviors as outlined above.

Those students who are selected for acceleration in Mathematics will then be considered for acceleration in Science for the following school year. Students selected to accelerate in Science take Regents Biology in place of Science 8. The grade 7 Science teachers carefully consider students for acceleration in science based on a teacher's review of the above-mentioned learning behaviors, their quarterly grades, and benchmark assessments/lab performance. Teachers and administrators also review students' reading, comprehension, vocabulary, and overall literacy skills. The Reading i-Ready diagnostics will be used to help assess students' reading and literacy skills. **It is essential that students who are enrolled in a High School Biology course can read at or above grade level.** A rubric is applied to these criteria to select students.

Students must demonstrate these skills to be successful as accelerated students. This is due in part because students' performance will be recorded permanently on their High School transcripts.

Families are notified by mail mid-May of a student's seventh-grade year if they are recommended to be accelerated.

Families who feel their student should be accelerated and did not initially meet the criteria needed to set up an appointment with the Math, Science, and Career and Technical Education Instructional Administrator at FMS before the end of June. Students can not be added to an accelerated Math or Science course after the second full week of school.

Criteria for a Twice-Accelerated Math Student:

What is a Twice Accelerated Student? This is a student who, after leaving Farnsworth Middle School, would have completed and achieved mastery in both Algebra 1 and Geometry before entering Guilderland High School as a 9th grader.

What is the Profile? What characteristics should they demonstrate?

1. Demonstrates mastery of grades 6 - 8 Math Content
2. Demonstrates the learning profile of an accelerated student, which includes but is not limited to the following:

- **Access and use resources without prompting**
- **Attend to precision.** Students demonstrate the ability to communicate precisely with others.
- They try to use clear definitions in discussions with others and in their reasoning. They state the meaning of their chosen symbols, including using the equal sign consistently and appropriately. They calculate accurately and efficiently and express numerical answers with a degree of precision appropriate for the problem context.
- Take advantage of opportunities to extend learning beyond what is delivered during class time. Students frequently excel at grade-level material and request and/or need extensions to their learning.
- **Follow directions independently**
- **Advocate for themselves and communicate with teachers frequently**
- **Can Model with Mathematics:** Students demonstrate that they can apply the mathematics they know to solve problems arising in everyday life, society, and the workplace.
- Demonstrate **the ability to make sense of problems and persevere in solving** them. Students can explain the meaning of a problem and look for entry points to its solution. They analyze givens, constraints, relationships, and goals. They make conjectures about the form and meaning of the solution and plan a solution pathway rather than simply jumping into a solution attempt.
- **Demonstrate focus and time management skills that support their learning**
- **Actively participate** in class instruction.
- Can look at incorrect solutions and explain what the person did incorrectly.

Data to Support

- Consistent quarterly grades that are 95 or better
- Consistent test grades that are 95 or better
- i-Ready score that demonstrates above grade 8 for **all** four domains

Timeline to identify twice-exceptional students:

- The third quarter of a student's 6th-grade year (to take Algebra 1 as a 7th grader)
- Has challenged the Algebra Regents in their 7th-grade year and has achieved an 85 on the Algebra 1 Regents. (Students cannot receive course credit if they challenge a Regents exam before 8th grade).

For consideration as students proceed in Mathematics at GHS:

- If a student is twice accelerated, parents should understand that their child will have the following course credits in high school: Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus, and Calculus (level to be determined). If they wish to have a 4th math credit on their transcript, their child will need to take computer programming courses or Statistics, or seek appropriate college-level coursework.

NYS Mathematics Practice Standards

Criteria to Challenge a Regents Exam (Credit by Examination):

Families may request that their 8th-grade student receive "Credit by examination" by "challenging the Regents" in June of their 8th-grade year. For 8th-grade students, the Regents exams for which students may receive credit by examination include Regents Algebra I or Regents Geometry.

Science Regents exams are not available to receive credit by examination, as students must complete the NYS lab requirement, including mandatory Investigations with a NYS-certified Science teacher. As per the New York State Department of Education, ***this option is available for those students whom the Superintendent or chief administrative officer determines will benefit academically by exercising this option.***

Students must first receive permission from the Superintendent of Schools and be prepared to submit to the Math, Science, and Technology Instructional Administrator at Farnsworth Middle School a portfolio of the student's work before the scheduled examination in June of the student's 8th-grade year. **Students must request permission with a reasonable time to complete the following requirements as per the part 100 regulations of the NYS Commissioner of Education:** link.

a. ***Unit of study*** *means at least 180 minutes of instruction per week throughout the school year, or the equivalent. Equivalent shall mean at least 180 minutes of instructional time per week for instruction delivered in a traditional face-to-face model or through alternative instructional experiences, including but not limited to digital technology or blended learning, that represents standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of an appropriately certified teacher. Instructional experiences shall include, but not be limited to: meaningful and frequent interaction with an appropriately certified teacher; academic and other supports designed to meet the needs of the individual student; and instructional content that reflects consistent academic expectations as in-person instruction. Any alternative instructional experience must include meaningful feedback on*

student assignments and methods of tracking student engagement.

b. ***Unit of credit*** *is earned by:*

1. *the mastery of the learning outcomes outlined in a New York State-developed or locally developed syllabus for a given high school subject, after a student has had the opportunity to complete a unit of study in the given subject matter area, except that during the 2019-2020 school year in those instances when a school is unable to provide a full unit of study due to closure of schools pursuant to an Executive Order(s) of the Governor under the State of emergency for the COVID-19 crisis, students shall earn a unit of credit if they have otherwise achieved the standards assessed in the provided coursework; or*

2. *pursuant to section 100.5(d)(1) of this Part,* ***a passing score of at least 85 percent or its equivalent on a department-approved examination in a given high school subject without the completion of a unit of study, and the successful completion of either an oral examination or a special project.***

To plan sufficiently to accommodate students requesting to challenge the Regents and provide adequate time for students to prepare for the exam, **students and their families must submit their request before the December/winter recess of their 8th-grade year, allowing the Superintendent of Schools time to grant permission before the close of the first semester. Request must be made in writing first to the Math, Science, and Tech Ed Instructional Administrator at FMS and subsequently to the Superintendent of Schools.**

(reference 2025 NYSED https://www.nysed.gov/standards-instruction/definitions-section-1001#credit)

Annual Awards And Student Recognition Program

Board Of Education Awards

This award program recognizes students in grades 6, 7, and 8 for success in the classroom.

- Outstanding Academic Achievement Award is presented to students who have demonstrated outstanding character while also maintaining an overall average of 95% (no rounding up) for the first three marking periods of the school year.
- Notable Academic Improvement Award is presented to students whose overall report card average has improved significantly since the beginning of the school year, and demonstrated that they have tried hard, displayed a positive attitude, and shown improved work habits in their academic performance.

President's Award For Academic Excellence

This award program, for 8th grade students, is sponsored by the U. S. Department of Education in partnership with the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. It was developed to honor those students who have excelled academically. To be eligible, students must meet the following criteria:

- Earned a cumulative grade point average of at least 93% (no rounding up), spanning all middle school years up to and including the 1st and 2nd marking periods of 8th grade

National Junior Honor Society

Scholarship, Service, Leadership, Character and Citizenship are the five key components for membership into the National Junior Honor Society. Only students at the eighth grade level are considered for candidacy.

Scholarship. At the end of the first marking period of eighth grade, all current students achieving a cumulative average of 90% or above, without rounding, (sixth and seventh grades and the first quarter of 8th grade.) will be considered academically eligible for National Junior Honor Society (NJHS). These students will receive, by letter, notification of eligibility in December. Those students receiving notification will then need to demonstrate Service, Character, Leadership and Citizenship.

Service, Leadership and Citizenship. To be considered further for NJHS, each candidate must perform 10 hours of community service. This can and should be done over the course of all three years at FMS but must be completed no later than the second week of February of a student's 8th grade year. A community service resources list of suggested, qualifying activities is available online on our FMS homepage. All community service hours are to be recorded in Section III of the NJHS Student Information Form.

Additionally, to demonstrate leadership and citizenship, eligible students must complete the remaining sections of the NJHS Student Information Form in its entirety. The completed form must be turned in no later than the second week of February of a student's 8th grade year to the NJHS Advisors. Forms that are incomplete will not be accepted or reviewed by the faculty council.

Student Information Forms are available in House Offices and can also be downloaded on the FMS page of the district website.

As a final step, the FMS faculty council will convene to review all eligible candidates who have completed and turned in all required paperwork for leadership, service, character, and citizenship. The faculty council will select those students to be inducted into the NJHS. Selection to NJHS is a privilege bestowed upon students by the faculty of FMS. Membership is granted only to those students who have met the standards for selection which are communicated above. All potential candidates should be aware that one cannot apply for membership in NJHS and that submission of a Student Information Packet and subsequent review by the faculty council does not guarantee selection.

Candidates selected for NJHS will be notified by letter and inducted during an evening ceremony in the spring semester. The expectation is that newly inducted NJHS students continue to serve and positively contribute to FMS for the conclusion of their eighth grade year. Students who are not selected for induction will be notified by letter as well. Those who wish to appeal the decision of the faculty council should do so in writing by the date indicated on the letter notifying them of the council's decision.

For additional information or to answer any NJHS questions, students and families are encouraged to access our FMS website NJHS resources or contact our NJHS advisor, Jamie Mullins at mullinsj@guilderlandschools.net.

Promotion and Retention of Students

The Guilderland Central School District will make every effort to place each student in the most appropriate learning level for a successful educational experience. The following guidelines govern promotion and retention:

Student Progression

Students who pass all subjects will be promoted. Students who do not make satisfactory progress in two or more basic subjects—reading, English language arts, mathematics, spelling, social studies and science—shall have their cases considered on an individual basis and may be retained.

A decision to retain shall be arrived at by consensus from a case conference approach involving the teacher, Building Principal, a member of the Pupil Personnel Services department, and parent/guardian. Factors to be considered include teacher recommendation; classroom achievement and attitude; standardized test scores; social, emotional and physical development; family conference; and, for identified students, recommendations by the committee on special education (CSE). No student will be retained without an appropriate educational plan defining what will occur that is instructionally different for the student. Once the educational plan has been implemented, the student will be monitored regularly. The educational plan will be revised until the student demonstrates acceptable performance. Early Identification/Intervention Classroom teachers are expected to make every effort to identify early those students at risk of failing. The House Principal and the parents/guardian must be notified promptly if retention is anticipated, and a special support program shall be designed for each child identified as in danger of failing.

Student Code Of Conduct

For more information on the GCSD Code of Conduct, please refer to the Board of Education policy 5300. A copy of this policy may be found on the district website, www.guilderlandschools.org, under the BOE pages.

Student Rights

The district is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under federal and state law and district policy. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil supportive school environment, all district students have the right to:

1. Take part in all district activities on an equal basis regardless of race, weight, color, creed, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, gender or sexual orientation or disability.
2. Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.
3. Access school policies, regulations and rules and, when necessary, receive an explanation of those rules from school personnel.

Student Responsibilities

All district students have the responsibility to:

1. Contribute to maintaining a safe, supportive and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and to show respect to other persons and to property.
2. Be familiar with and abide by all district policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.
3. Attend school every day unless they are legally excused and be in class, on time, and prepared to learn.
4. Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible.
5. React to direction given by teachers, administrators and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
6. Work to develop strategies to resolve problems, conflicts and manage anger.
7. Ask questions when they do not understand.
8. Seek help in solving problems.
9. Dress appropriately for school and school functions.
10. Accept responsibility for their actions.
11. Conduct themselves as representatives of the district when participating in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events and hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship.

Disciplinary Procedures

Discipline is most effective when it deals directly with the problem at the time and place it occurs, and in a way that is viewed as fair and impartial by the student. Therefore, before seeking outside help, the staff member

will first try to create a change in the behavior. When the staff member has made an effort to bring about positive change in the behavior, and it hasn't been successful, the staff member will bring the matter to the attention of an administrator. The staff member and the administrator will develop a strategy for addressing the problem.

Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following:

- The student's age
- The nature of the offense and the circumstances which led to the offense
- The student's prior disciplinary record
- The effectiveness of other forms of discipline
- Information from parents,teachers and/or others, as appropriate
- Other extenuating circumstances

As a general rule, discipline will be progressive. This means that a student's first violation will usually merit a lighter penalty than subsequent violations.

If the conduct of a student is related to a disability or suspect disability, the student shall be referred to the Committee on Special Education and discipline, if warranted, shall be administered consistent with the separate requirements of the Code of Conduct for disciplining students with a disability or presumed disability.

Prohibited Conduct

It is our expectation that students will respect others, act responsibly and make good decisions regarding their interactions with fellow students, faculty, staff and 30 their use of the school building.

It is prohibited to engage in conduct that is disorderly. Below are some examples:

- Running in hallways
- Making unreasonable noises
- Using language or gestures that are profane, lewd, vulgar and abusive
- Obstructing vehicle or pedestrian traffic
- Engaging in any willful act that disrupts the normal operation of the school community
- Trespassing (Students are not permitted in any school building, other than the one they regularly attend, during regular school hours without permission from an administrator, teacher, coach or advisor ahead of time)
- Computer/electronic communications misuse. It is prohibited to engage in conduct that is insubordinate
- Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators, or other school employees in charge of the student, or demonstrating disrespect
- Being late or leaving school without permission
- Skipping detention

It is prohibited to engage in conduct that is disruptive:

- Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators, or other school personnel in charge of students
- Being late for school or classes frequently
- Being frequently unprepared for class

Harassment

It is the policy of the Guilderland Central School District not to permit discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, creed, weight, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, sexual orientation or disability in the district's educational programs, activities or employment.

Harassment may take the form of comments, name-calling, jokes, stalking, perpetuating rumors or gossip, offensive gestures or language, assault or any other behavior that is designed to annoy, intimidate or cause fear.

Hazing and Bullying

Bullying and/or hazing of students and staff are prohibited behaviors and will not be tolerated at Farnsworth Middle School.

Hazing means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a risk of emotional, physical or psychological harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, club or for any other purpose. *(BOE Policy 5030)*

One of the goals of the Guilderland Central School District is to prevent bullying. The Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining a learning atmosphere which is respectful and supportive. Providing a safe school environment where all students and employees are treated with respect and dignity, and are free from bullying, intimidation and harassment is one of the district's highest priorities. This freedom is fundamental to our K-12 education program and is extended to everyone without exception. *(BOE Policy 5040)*

Bullying is defined as a hostile activity which harms or induces fear through the threat of further aggression and/or creates terror.

Bullying may be premeditated or a sudden activity. It may be subtle or easy to identify, done by one person or a group. Bullying includes but is not necessarily limited to:

- Power imbalance - occurs when a bully uses his/her physical or social power over a victim
- Intent to harm - the bully seeks to inflict physical or emotional harm and/or takes pleasure in this activity
- Threat of further aggression- the bully and the victim believe the bullying will continue
- Terror - when any bullying increases, it becomes a "systematic violence or harassment used to intimidate and maintain dominance."(Barbara Coloroso, The Bully, The Bullied & The Bystander, 2003)

There are at least three kinds of bullying: physical, verbal and social/relational.

- **Physical** - poking, slapping, hitting, tripping or causing a fall, choking, kicking, punching, biting, pinching, scratching, spitting, twisting arms or legs, damaging clothes and personal property, threatening gestures, setting fires, assault with a weapon.
- **Verbal** - name calling, insulting remarks, verbal teasing, frightening phone calls, violent threats, extortion, taunting, gossip, spreading rumors, racist slurs, threatening electronic communications, and anonymous notes.
- **Social or Relational** - excluding someone from a group, isolating, shunning, spreading rumors or gossiping, arranging public humiliation, undermining relationships, teasing about clothing, looks, giving dirty looks, aggressive stares.

Bullying is a violation of our district's core values and will not be tolerated. The Board of Education condemns all forms of bullying. No one—students or employees—should be fearful of being bullied or harassed. The actions of any one person or group of individuals which threaten the health and safety of students and/or staff must be addressed promptly. Early intervention, reinforcement of a consistent message and follow through from students, parents, staff and administration can ensure that everyone's right to learn and work in a safe environment is respected.

While the focus of this policy is on prevention, bullying acts may still occur. In these cases, offenders will be given the clear message that their actions are wrong and the behavior must improve. Offenders will receive in-school guidance in making positive choices in their relationships with others. If appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken by the administration.

Students who have been bullied, parents whose children have been bullied or other students who observe bullying behavior are encouraged to make a verbal and/or written complaint to a teacher, coach, bus driver, social worker, school counselor, supervisor, or administrator. Intervention by adults and bystanders is an important step to prevent escalation and to resolve issues in the earliest stages. At all times, complaints will be documented, tracked and handled according to the regulations and procedures outlined in Board policy and the district's Code of Conduct.

Student Dress Code

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Teachers and all other district personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

A student's dress, grooming and appearance, including hair style/color, jewelry, make-up, and nails, must:

- Be unlikely to injure people or damage property, ensure compliance with this code, and avoid causing significant disruptions or interference with the educational process.
- Recognize that extremely brief garments and see-through garments are not appropriate.
- Ensure that underwear is covered by outer clothing (visible waistbands and straps are not violations).
- Include footwear at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed.
- Not cover the student's face to the extent the student is not identifiable, except for a medical or religious purpose.
- Not include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous, or denigrate, harass, or discriminate against others on account of race (including traits historically associated with race, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles like braids, locks, and twists), color, weight, religion, religious practice, disability/ability, creed, national origin, ethnic group, gender (including gender identity and expression), sex, sexual orientation disability/ability, or socio-economic status.
- Not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco nicotine products,

marijuana (THC) or controlled substances or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.

Nothing in this policy will be construed to limit the ability of students to express their gender identity through clothing, jewelry, makeup, or nail color or styles, or to discipline students for doing so. Likewise, nothing in this policy will be construed to restrict students from wearing hairstyles as a trait historically associated with race (such as but not limited to hair texture and protective hairstyles like braids, locks, and twists) or to discipline them for doing so.

Each Building Principal or designee is responsible for informing all students and their parents of the student dress code at the beginning of the school year and any revisions to the dress code made during the school year.

Enforcement of this dress code must be approached with careful consideration and sensitivity, with the goal of supporting students in reaching their full potential, not shaming or criminalizing them, and to minimize loss of instructional time. Staff, preferably those who have a positive relationship with the student, are expected to address dress code violations with students

privately, determine if there are factors impacting the student's ability to meet the dress code, and help address these issues. Students whose appearance violates the student dress code are required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item, and if necessary or practical, replacing it with an acceptable item. Any student who refuses to do so will be subject to discipline, up to and including in-school suspension for the day. Any student who repeatedly fails to comply with the dress code will be subject to further discipline, up to and including out of school suspension if after restorative justice principles have been implemented the student continues to refuse to cooperate.

Ref: Education Law §11(9), (10), Executive Law §292(37), (38), Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Cmty. Sch. Dist., 393 U.S. 503 (1969), Appeal of Parsons, 32 EDR 672 (1993)
Adopted: August 9, 2022

Student Conduct In The Cafetorium

Lunch should be an enjoyable time for all. Cooperative behavior is required in the cafetorium to help create a pleasant atmosphere. A varied lunch menu is provided each day. Students may select the main meal, choose from the a la carte menu or bring lunch from home. Students have thirty minutes in which to eat lunch and engage in quiet conversations with friends. Students may pay for their lunch each day or set-up an online payment account (see https://www.guilderlandschools.org/district-services/cafeteria-services/). Book bags are NOT allowed in the cafetorium and there are no reserved places in line.

To make lunch time more enjoyable for everyone at Farnsworth Middle School, the cafetorium staff asks that all students:

- Be polite and respectful of all staff and students
- Walk at all times
- Sit in assigned areas and remain seated
- Talk in a quiet, conversational voice—no shouting
- No pushing, running or throwing food, paper or other objects

- Snack line passes will be limited and provided by lunchroom supervisors to minimize snack line congestion
- Consume all food and beverages in the cafetorium (Opened food items cannot be taken out of the cafetorium)
- Be neat and pick up after yourself to help keep the area clean (Keep uneaten food on trays and empty trays carefully)
- Remain seated until dismissed by a staff member (Dismissal will be by areas. A pass is needed to leave the cafetorium at times other than dismissal)
- Recycle items that are suitable for it

Students who misbehave during lunch time will be reminded of the rules after their first offense. Students who continue to misbehave will have their parents contacted and may be disciplined under the district's Code of Conduct.

Use Of Personal Electronic Devices

At Farnsworth Middle School, the use of personal devices is guided by the following criteria:

- Ensuring safety
- Minimizing disruption
- Developing digital citizenship

All personal wearable electronic devices (cellphones, ear buds, smart watches, etc.) are required to be kept in a student's locked locker or left at home. Misuse of any personal electronic device or its features is a violation of the code of conduct and may result in disciplinary action. In addition, these personal electronic devices may be confiscated and a parent will be required to pick it up.

Use Of Bicycles, Skateboards, Roller Blades, and Sneaker Skates On School Property

Students may ride their bicycles to school; however, they must walk their bicycles on school sidewalks. As soon as students arrive at school, they should park and lock their bicycles in the appropriate area. The school is not responsible for stolen or damaged bicycles.

Skateboards, roller skates, sneaker skates and roller blades are not allowed to be used on school property. If a student brings these items to school, they may be confiscated. Students should see their House Principal to make arrangements for the return of the confiscated item.

Fighting/Violence

Fighting will not be tolerated. Students are expected to AVOID physical confrontations at all times. This includes pushing, shoving, tripping, hitting or any other action that could result in an injury to another person. Students are responsible for not contributing to or encouraging physical confrontations or negative behaviors. Students are responsible for preventing conflicts and informing adults of concerns or problems. Everyone has a choice when faced with physical confrontation. Walking away is the first choice and getting help from an adult to resolve a conflict is a second choice.

If a fight occurs there will be serious consequences which may include:

- Immediate suspension from school (in-school/out-of-school);
- Parent involvement;
- Removal of students from school activities for a period of time, including field trips, dances, student athletic contests and/or

practices, team events as determined by an administrator;

- Community/Volunteer services;
- Counseling, if necessary;
- Involvement of the School Resource Officer, if necessary.

Theft

Theft occurs each year and students complain of books and valuables that are lost or stolen.

In the majority of cases, carelessness is the reason. The school is NOT responsible for items that are lost or stolen.

With that in mind, all students:

- Should keep all valuables in a locked locker;
- Should not bring large amounts of cash or items of special value to school;
- Should not share locker combinations with anyone.

Vandalism and Property Damage

Students who destroy or vandalize school property are required to pay for losses or damages. If a student willfully destroys school property, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken and students may be subject to arrest.

Weapons

Board of Education policy prohibits anyone, except an officer of the law, from bringing a weapon onto school grounds. Immediate out-of-school suspension pending a Superintendent's Hearing will result. Any replicas of a weapon, toys that simulate weapons or parts of a weapon are not allowed. Verbal and written threats regarding the use of weapons may constitute violation of the policy and be subject to disciplinary action. *(BOE Policy 5312.2)*

Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco

Board of Education policy strictly prohibits possessing, consuming, distributing, or exchanging alcoholic beverages or illegal substances—or being under the influence of either. Additionally, smoking a cigarette, cigar, pipe, electronic cigarette (i.e., vape), or using chewing or smokeless tobacco, or smoking/vaping/ingesting cannabis or concentrated cannabis (includes cannabis products) or smoking cannabinoid hemp (except for lawful medical cannabis use in compliance with state law and regulation).

Possessing, consuming, selling, offering, manufacturing, distributing or exchanging alcoholic beverages or illegal substances, or being under the influence, is prohibited.

"Illegal substances" include, but are not limited to, inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, heroin, fentanyl, steroids, and look-alike drugs. Additionally, this includes any synthetic versions commonly known as "designer drugs," which are designed to imitate the effects and uses of illegal drugs and are chemically similar, regardless of their labeling for human consumption.

Engaging in these types of behaviors carry serious consequences. These may include long-term suspension, a Superintendent's Hearing, and the involvement of law enforcement.

Academic Misconduct

Board of Education policy prohibits engaging in any form of academic misconduct. This includes plagiarism, cheating, copying, altering records or assisting another student in any of these actions, misuse of Chromebooks,

and going to websites that are not permitted. Students who are found to have participated in any of these types of behaviors will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Selling, Purchasing or Trading Items

Selling, purchasing or trading any items at school, unless it is school sponsored, is strictly prohibited. This includes candy and gum, etc. Items found being offered for sale or trade will be taken and returned when a parent/guardian comes to pick up their child.

Off-Campus Misconduct

Board of Education Policy prohibits engaging in off-campus misconduct that interferes with, or can reasonably be expected to disrupt the educational process in the school or at a school function. This includes the following:

- Cyberbullying (i.e., inflicting willful and repeated harm through the use of electronic text;
- Threatening or harassing students or school personnel over the phone or other electronic device.

Due Process/Disciplinary Penalties

The amount of due process a student is entitled to receive before a penalty is imposed depends on the penalty being imposed. In all cases, regardless of the penalty imposed, the school personnel authorized to impose the penalty must inform the student of the alleged misconduct and must investigate, to the extent necessary, the facts surrounding the alleged misconduct. All students will have an opportunity to present their version of the facts to the school personnel imposing the disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.

Students who are to be given penalties other than an oral warning, written warning or written notification to their parents are entitled to additional rights before the penalty is imposed.

Consequences may include the following:

- Detention
- Bus suspension
- Suspension from athletic participation, extracurricular activities, and other privileges
- In-school suspension
- Teacher disciplinary removal of disruptive students
- Short-term (5 days or less) suspension from school (Building Principal)
- Long-term (more than 5 days) suspension from school (Superintendent Hearing)
- Permanent suspension from school (Superintendent and BOE)

Suspension of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities shall be entitled to all procedural safeguards as non-disabled students. Additionally, the Committee on Special Education shall:

- Conduct a behavioral assessment and develop or review behavioral intervention plans when the number of days suspended reaches ten
- Conduct a manifestation determination

Student Searches

School lockers, desks, and other such equipment are not the private property of students but the property of the school district, and as such may be opened and subject to

inspection from time to time by school officials. *(BOE Policy 5330)*

Under special circumstances, school officials may search students, particularly if there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses illegal matter, for example, a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs. Students must be aware that such items are forbidden both on school property and at school-related activities.

Flag Salute and Pledge of Allegiance

New York State schools are required to include as part of their daily program a daily pledge of allegiance to the flag and instruct students on the proper procedures for demonstrating respect for the flag of the United States of America. Students that are conscientiously opposed to the pledge or salute, may abstain from these ceremonies, but must be respectful of the flag and others participating in the ceremonies. Students should remain silent and their actions should not interrupt the ceremony. Students traveling in the hallways during the pledge should also do their best to follow the same guidelines.

Student Complaints And Grievances

Students will be given an opportunity to be heard regarding complaints and grievances they may have. On issues affecting the student body, students should discuss the matter with their student government representatives before appealing to the school administration.

A student filing a complaint for any matter, or alleging discrimination on the basis of disability and/or sex including sexual harassment or harassment on the basis of sexual orientation, should read the following information regarding the resolution of the complaint. The following procedures may also apply to student grievances over other matters, such as racial harassment.

Investigation of a Complaint

Upon receipt of a formal or informal complaint, a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of the allegations will follow. All witnesses shall be interviewed and complainants will be notified of the outcome of the investigation.

Informal Complaints

The Guilderland Central School District encourages the resolution of all student complaints as promptly as possible and at the lowest level possible. Accordingly, students are urged to discuss complaints first with the appropriate teacher, staff member or House Principal. However, if the complaint concerns sexual harassment, the student and/or parent should notify the Compliance Officer, Regan Johnson, at the District Office. In no event will the student be required to discuss the alleged harassment with the individual alleged to be harassing him or her.

Upon receipt of an informal complaint, the Compliance Officer, designee, House Principal or other appropriate staff member will conduct a prompt investigation to determine what occurred and then take appropriate steps to resolve the situation.

Complainants have the right to end the informal process at any time and begin the formal stage of the complaint process.

Formal Complaints

Formal complaints may be submitted either to initially report a complaint or as a follow-up to an unsatisfactory resolution of an informal attempt to resolve a complaint.

Extracurricular Activities

Students are encouraged to participate in many co-curricular activities offered at FMS. Participation enriches the middle school experience, and makes the time here more meaningful and enjoyable. An Activities Brochure is available to students and parents at https://www.guilderlandschools.org/farnsworth-middle-school/clubs-and-activities/. If you have an idea for an activity, talk to a teacher or administrator about possibly adding something new to the list. This is your school, so join in! Listen to the TV news for important daily announcements about clubs, sports, and activities.

The Guilderland Central School District offers a variety of co-curricular and extracurricular activities for students. Participation in such activities provides students with experience in building social relationships, developing interests in an academic area, and gaining an understanding of the responsibilities of good citizenship.

Members of school-sponsored clubs and teams are representatives of the school district. Farnsworth Middle School students who participate in extracurricular activities are expected to conform to standards that meet or exceed those in the school district Code of Conduct. *(BOE Policy 5210)*

Student Organizations

The Board of Education encourages secondary level students to pursue clubs and interests which may not be related directly to any of the curriculum programs offered in the district. In pursuit of such goals and in compliance with the federal Equal Access Act, the Board maintains a limited open forum by which middle school students may meet for voluntary student-initiated activities unrelated directly to the curriculum, regardless of the religious, political, philosophical or other content of speech of such activities. Contact the House Principal for details.
(BOE policy 5210)

The district reserves the right to require a group to submit:

- A list of its members designated as contacts
- A copy of its constitution and/or bylaws
- The constitution and/or bylaws of any off-campus organization with which it is affiliated

Generally, student groups may not restrict membership on the basis of race, sex, national origin or other arbitrary criteria.

Distribution Of Literature On School Grounds

When students wish to personally express themselves in the broader school community by distributing materials, they must seek prior approval from the building principal or his/her designee. The building principal or his/her designee will render his/her decision within two school days of receiving the request. The building principal shall give due consideration to the protected right of freedom of expression, the maintenance of the normal operation of school and its activities, the protection of persons and property and the need to assist students in learning appropriate ways to exercise their rights. Unless such student expression takes place within the confines of a school-sponsored event/activity authorization, will be granted if:

The material is distributed as directed by the Principal or designee in such a manner as to not materially or substantially interfere with the rights of others or substantially disrupt the normal operation of the school;

- The material is not considered to be obscene, lewd, indecent, libelous, an invasion of the privacy of other individuals, or an expression that attacks a person's character, family, or actual or perceived race, color, religion, religious practice, age, weight, sex, ethnic group, national origin, physical appearance, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or gender expression) or disabling condition.
- The material is free from advertisements or promotion of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, liquor, illegal or illicit drugs, or drug paraphernalia or other products or services harmful to minors and/or not permitted to minors by law, or advocating breaking laws and school policies and/or regulations.

Student Web Pages

School-sponsored web pages and web pages created as part of the educational program may be regulated for content similar to the standards that apply to other student publications. Student web pages created for non-school purposes may be regulated by school authorities as to the time, manner, place and duration for distribution.

Student Fundraising

It is recognized that fundraising is the major source of money for student organizations. Each group must receive the permission of the Building Principal or the Building Principal's designee to engage in any fundraising activity at least two weeks before any items are ordered or any commitments are made to either outside companies or to students. *(BOE Policy 5252)*

Student Field Trips

Farnsworth Middle School believes field trips are an important part of the educational program. By providing students with hands-on experience and exposure to the larger community, field trips can greatly enhance a student's educational experiences. *(BOE Policy 4531)*

A signed permission slip from the parent or guardian is required for each child for each field trip. A child who does not provide a signed permission slip will be prohibited from participating and will be given an alternative assignment on the day of the field trip.

The classroom teacher will provide parents with specific instructions for lunch, appropriate dress, and arrival and departure times. If the weather is bad on the day of a scheduled field trip, parents should contact the Main Office to inquire on the status of the trip.

All students are expected to exhibit proper behavior on field trips. While field trips take place outside of school, school rules still apply. Students are expected to abide by the district's Code of Conduct while on a field trip. In addition, students who are unable to maintain appropriate behavior in the classroom may jeopardize their opportunity to go on a field trip. Parents will be notified prior to the trip if there are concerns about their child's behavior.

Cancellations

The overall safety of the proposed trip location and of travel conditions will be a key factor in granting approval for field trips. Should conditions change during the time between the approval of a trip and the actual date of departure, it may become necessary to cancel the trip and deposited monies may be forfeited.

Spectator Sportsmanship at Interscholastic Events

The Guilderland Central School District expects the same behavior of all spectators at school-sponsored sports events that it expects of its staff and students during the regular school day. Spectators at sports events who do not abide by the following guidelines will, in the first instance, be reminded of their obligation, and in the second instance, be asked to leave the event and/or refrain from attending future events for a specific period of time.

All spectators at Guilderland Central School District's interscholastic events will be expected to abide by the following:

- Encourage good sportsmanship for all players, coaches,and officials at every game, practice or other sports event;
- Place the emotional and physical well-being of the students participating first;
- Support the coaches and officials working with the children and encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all;
- Demand a sports environment for the children that is free from drugs, tobacco and alcohol pursuant to the district's Code of Conduct;
- Encourage sportsmanlike behavior from all participants and other spectators.

Support Services

Accident Prevention and Safety Procedures

These rules are to ensure the safety of students and employees of the district while on district property.

All students and members of the school community must:

- Immediately report any conditions involving equipment or buildings which may be dangerous to student or employee health or welfare;
- Immediately report any unsafe practices by anyone in the building or on the grounds
- Observe the 15-mile per hour speed limit on school grounds.

Eye Safety Devices

Eye safety devices are provided for all students, instructors and visitors who are engaged in or observing the use of materials or equipment which may potentially damage eyesight.

Student Health Services

The Farnsworth Middle School nurse monitors the health of all students in the school and is the liaison between the school and various health agencies. All students are required to have an updated emergency card on file in the Health Office. This card should be filled out completely and signed by the parent or guardian. The Health Office should be advised of any changes in address, phone numbers, and emergency contact person(s).

The school nurse will provide emergency care for students involved in accidents or unexpected medical situations. If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she should inform a teacher and report to the nurse. If the nurse finds it necessary to send the student home, a parent/guardian will be notified and arrangements will be made to pick up the student in the nurse's office.

Administration of Prescription Medicine in School

If a student needs to take medication during the school day, he or she must follow these rules:

- Bring a note from his or her parent which gives the nurse permission to store the medication for the student's use, releasing the Board and its employees of liability for the administration of medication;
- Give the nurse a doctor's note with instructions about dosage, times given, etc.;
- Bring a copy of the prescription;
- An adult must bring the medication to school in the original container.

Administration of Over-the-Counter Medication in School

Over-the-counter medication such as Tylenol, ibuprofen or Advil MUST be in an original container accompanied by a note with specific instructions, signed by a parent or guardian and a healthcare professional. Medications wrapped in plastic bags, envelopes, tinfoil, etc. will not be administered.

Students are not permitted to carry or administer prescription medication.

Student Physicals

All seventh grade students are required by law to have a physical exam given by the school doctor or family physician. Sixth graders should have received a physical form with their June report card (otherwise physical forms may be obtained online or from the school nurse for the family physician to fill out). If a form is not returned to the school nurse by Oct. 1 of the school year, the school physician will complete a student's physical in November or December. Students wishing to participate in an interscholastic athletic program may also need to have a physical examination. Please see the Athletic Department for further information.

Health Screening

In accordance with the law, the school will provide height, weight, and scoliosis (spine check) screening for all students in grades 6, 7, and 8. In addition, students in grade 7 will also receive vision and hearing screening. Parents will be called if a student shows significant changes or has difficulty with the screening.

Immunizations

New York State requires all children to be immunized against polio, rubella, diphtheria, mumps, measles, hepatitis B, and varicella (chicken pox) or have medical documentation should the child have already had the disease. Parental recall is not acceptable. Students who are entering 6th grade and who are 11 years of age or older must receive an immunization containing tetanus toxoid, diphtheria, and a cellular pertussis (Tdap). Proof of immunization for new students must be presented for admission.

Parents will be notified of the required immunizations needed for entry, certificates of proof, and available resources for obtaining appropriate certificates. For more information on health issues, contact the school nurse at 456-6010 Ext. 2015.

First Aid

In emergencies, the school nurse will follow established first aid procedures. These procedures include the following requirements:

- No medical treatment except first aid is permitted in school;
- A master first aid kit shall be kept and properly maintained in the school and on each school bus;
- No drugs shall be administered by school personnel unless authorized by a physician;
- Parents are asked to sign and submit an emergency medical authorization which shall indicate the procedure they wish the school to follow in the event of a medical emergency involving their child;
- In all cases where the nature of an illness or an injury appears serious, the parent will be contacted if possible,and the instructions on the child's emergency card followed. In extreme emergencies, arrangements may be made for the child's immediate hospitalization whether or not the parent can be reached.

Automated External Defibrillators (AED)

The Guilderland Central School District maintains on site, in each instructional school facility, at least one functional automated external defibrillator (AED) for use during emergencies. Whenever public school facilities are used for school-sponsored or school-approved curricular or extracurricular events or activities or a school-sponsored

athletic contest is held at any location, school administrators shall ensure the presence of at least one staff person who is trained in the operation and use of an AED. Where a school-sponsored competitive athletic event is held at a site other than a public school facility, the public school officials must assure that AED equipment is provided on-site.

District and School Safety Plans

The Guilderland School District has adopted a district-wide school safety plan as well as building-level emergency response plans for each building in the district. These plans are intended to define how the district and each school building will respond to acts of violence and other disasters.

They provide a framework for identifying and implementing appropriate strategies for creating and maintaining a safe, secure learning environment for all students.

A copy of the district wide school safety plan is available for examination in the district offices.

Fire Drills

The Building Principal is responsible for conducting fire drills in order to instruct students and staff in exiting the school building in an emergency in the shortest time possible and without confusion and panic. Fire drills shall include instruction on fire drill exits and fire alarm boxes, as well as fire drill procedures.

All students are expected to cooperate with staff members during fire drills, and to leave the building in a quiet and orderly manner. The exit route is posted in each room. Students must stay with their teacher. Distracting behavior will be subject to either teacher or administrative discipline, and may merit a penalty.

School Food Services

The Farnsworth Middle School offers a free, reduced and paid breakfast and lunch program.

Students can access the menu on the school district website, www.guilderlandschools.org, where it will indicate the "hot lunch" of the day. Sandwiches made to order, salads, hamburgers, cheeseburgers and chicken products are also offered daily. Milk, fruit and vegetables accompany each meal. Ice cream is also available to students.

The school breakfast program provides students with a healthy morning meal. Each breakfast includes milk, fruit, juice and cereal or hot entree.

Information about school breakfast and lunch prices, as well as payment options, may be found on the district website. Families may choose to either pay for meals in cash or by check (made payable to School Lunch Fund) or parents may set-up an online payment account at www.parentonline.net.

Eligibility for free and reduced price meals is based upon the economic need of the family. Applications are distributed each September to determine eligibility. Applications may also be completed and submitted online via the district website. Parents must file a new application for the program each September. Families who fail to file a new application annually will be discontinued from the program 30 school days into school. For information on this program, please call the school lunch director at (518) 456-6200, Ext. 3110.

Transportation

Transportation Overview

The Guilderland Central School District is committed to providing a safe and economical transportation system for district students. (BOE Policy 8410) With the start of a new year, it is beneficial to review what students need to do when riding the bus:

- Arrive at the designated bus stop five minutes before pickup. A list can be found in our Transportation newsletter.
- Stand back five feet from where the bus will stop.
- Cross at least ten feet in front of the bus and ONLY after the driver has signaled that it is safe to cross.
- Find another way to transport objects, such as musical instruments, that are bigger than they can hold.
- Permission will not be given for any students to be dropped off at a different location this school year. Due to the limited number of students on each bus route the district cannot switch students from their assigned routes.
- Our after school activity period this school year will run Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 3:25 - 4:05.
- Questions about the school transportation program should be directed to the Director of Transportation at (518) 861-6434

Student Conduct On School Buses

In order to ensure a safe bus ride to and from school, the following rules must be observed:

- Keep all noise at a low level
- No offensive language
- Keep hands, feet and all pos-sessions to yourself
- Respect others, school property, and yourself (The throwing of objects in or out of the bus is prohibited)
- Listen to the bus driver; Remain seated until the driver gives permission for you to leave (The driver is authorized to assign seats)
- Eating, drinking, vaping or smoking on the bus is prohibited

The driver's responsibility is to safely transport the students to and from school. It is the student's responsibility to conduct him/herself in an orderly and safe manner. Respect between students and drivers is the key to a safe ride to school. SAFETY is our main goal. Parents should be aware of the growing volume of traffic in our district. Distractions to the driver from behavioral problems present a serious danger to all passengers.

Discipline problems will be referred in writing by the bus driver to the House Principal. The penalty for continued misbehavior may range from suspension from riding the bus to suspension from school. All school rules apply while students are riding the buses. All students riding school buses are expected to maintain good conduct while traveling.
(BOE Policy 5320)

Transportation For School-Sponsored Events

When Farnsworth Middle School provides transportation to students for a school-sponsored activity or event, it will also provide return transportation unless the parent or legal guardian of a participating student has given the district written notice authorizing an alternative form of return transportation for their student. If intervening circumstances

make return transportation impractical, a chaperone or other representative of Farnsworth Middle School will remain with the student until the student's parent or guardian has been contacted and informed of the intervening circumstances, and the student has been delivered to his/her parent or guardian.

Video Cameras On School Buses

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to maintain and improve discipline and to ensure the safety and welfare of its staff and students on school transportation vehicles. After having carefully considered the rights of privacy with the district's duty to ensure discipline for the health, welfare and safety of staff and students on school transportation vehicles, the Board supports the use of video cameras on its school buses.

Video cameras may be used to monitor student behavior on school vehicles transporting students to and from school or extracurricular activities. Students found violating bus conduct rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the district's Code of Conduct. The district shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws related to personal records when the district is considering keeping the recording. And although video recordings will be used primarily for the purpose of evidence for maintaining discipline, the district may use the recordings for any other purpose it deems appropriate. *(BOE Policy 8414.4)*

Parents will also receive information regarding school closings and delays in their email inbox, as a text on their mobile phone or a phone call via the SchoolMessenger service. Parents do not need to register for this service.Please note: Parents are always encouraged to rely on multiple sources of information for school closings, delayed openings, and early dismissals. If school is delayed, any child who walks to school or is trans-ported by parents should arrive later as well. There is no supervision of students until staff is pres-ent in the building. If school dismisses early or is closed, all evening activities including continuing education classes are also canceled. Prepare in advance for early dismissal. Have a plan in place so your child knows where to go if school should close early. If no report is heard, it can be assumed the schools are opening on time.

School Closings

The Superintendent of Schools may delay the opening of school, close the school or dismiss students/staff early in the event of severe weather or hazardous road conditions. Every attempt will be made so elementary school students will not be left without proper parental supervision.

Parents are requested to avoid calling schools on days of poor weather; it is important to keep school phone lines open. School closing and delayed starting times will be announced over local radio stations. The following television/radio stations will carry information regarding emergency closings:

- WGY 810 AM
- WYJB 95.5 FM
- WRVE 99.5 FM
- WRGB TV Channel 6
- WXXA TV Channel 8
- WTEN TV Channel 10
- WNYT TV Channel 13
- Cable News Channel 9
- Spectrum 1302 (Town of Guilderland)

School closings, delayed openings and early dismissals resulting from weather conditions or other emergencies will be announced on the homepage of the district's website, www.guilderlandschools.org.

Parents will also receive information regarding school closings and delays in their email inbox, as a text on their mobile phone or a phone call via the SchoolMessenger service. Parents do not need to register for this service.

Please note: Parents are always encouraged to rely on multiple sources of information for school closings, delayed openings, and early dismissals.

If school is delayed, any child who walks to school or is transported by parents should arrive later as well. There is no supervision of students until staff is present in the building.

If school dismisses early or is closed, all evening activities including continuing education classes are also canceled.

Prepare in advance for early dismissal. Have a plan in place so your child knows where to go if school should close early. If no report is heard, it can be assumed the schools are opening on time.

Parent Packet

Parents With Disabilities

Parents with disabilities will be afforded an equal opportunity to participate in the services, programs and activities of the district, particularly those which are designed for parental involvement and are directly related to their child's academic and/or disciplinary progress (e.g., parent/teacher conferences, and/or meetings with other school personnel).

Requests for accommodations should be directed to the Superintendent at least 10 business days prior to the scheduled activity or program. Such requests should include a description of the parent's needs and the specific accommodation they are requesting.

Parental Involvement

The Guilderland Central School District believes that children succeed when there is a strong partnership between home and school. This partnership thrives on open communication between parents and the school, parental involvement in their child's education, and parental responsibility for all aspects of their child's education.

Parents can become partners in their child's education by using the following strategies:

- Becoming familiar with their child's school activities and academic program, including special programs offered by the district
- Discussing with school counselors, teachers and principals the options and opportunities available to their child
- Monitoring their child's academic progress and contacting teachers when necessary
- Attending scheduled teacher/school conferences
- Monitoring their child's attendance at school (Regular school attendance is important if a child is to achieve his/her full potential. Parents are urged to make an extra effort to ensure their child establishes a regular attendance pattern).

Learning does not end when the school day is over. The Guilderland Central School District encourages parents to set aside time for reading, informal learning activities, and assisting their child with homework assignments. Parents can also become involved in their child's education on a broader scale by joining the Farnsworth Middle School Parent Teacher Association. The PTA typically serves as a strong link between home and school. By joining the PTA parents become partners in advancing the educational goals of the school district while enhancing the welfare of their child.

PTA meetings are held at the Middle School on a monthly basis. Check the school calendar for dates and times.

Access To School District Records

Often, parents, students and other community members may want to have specific information about the schools in this district. Interested persons may inspect and/or copy school district records at the Office of the Records Access Officer located at district office during regular business hours on any business day on which the Board of Education offices are open.

Requests to inspect or make copies of records must be submitted in writing, either in person or by mail, to the Records Access Officer, who will provide information regarding fees and the number of copies available. *(For more information, please see BOE Policy 1120.)*

Access To Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives parents and students over 18 years of age (referred to in the law as "eligible students") the following rights:

- The right to inspect and review (your child's) (your) education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the Building Principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The Principal will make arrangements for access and notify you of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- The right to request the amendment of (your child's) (your) education records that you believe are inaccurate or misleading.

Parents or eligible students may ask the district to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading by writing to the Principal, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specifying why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the district decides not to amend the record as requested, it will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided at this same time.

- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in (your child's) (your) education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); 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 or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or 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.

- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The Office that administers FERPA is the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

Guilderland Central School's formal reporting system includes report cards and/or forms developed by the professional staff and issued periodically. Scheduled conferences between parents and teachers, and interim reports will

be issued every five weeks. Parents are urged to visit the school and to meet with school counselors and teachers whenever necessary. Please schedule all such visits through the house secretaries in advance.

Visitors To FMS

Keeping students safe is the highest priority at GCSD. Parents of FMS students are encouraged to visit periodically during the course of the school year.

All visitors must enter through the main entrance, and will be buzzed in through a first set of vestibule doors.

Visitors requesting entry into FMS through the second set of doors will be required to present a valid driver's license, government-issued ID or passport in order to enter. Our receptionist will print a badge that must be visibly worn at all times while in the building.

Parents and visitors must check out with the school receptionist upon leaving. The District's security software E-Z Lobby uses ID information – first name, last name and date of birth – to identify potential sex-offender registry matches. Once an individual's ID has been scanned and is in the system, visitors may enter without the need to be scanned again.

Those visiting a district school for the first time should arrive early to allow for the time necessary to complete this process.

For certain events, teachers may request parents and visitors to RSVP in advance. Unless they have a specific reason and prior approval from the Building Principal, student visitors from other schools are not permitted to enter school buildings.

Release of Information To The Media

From time to time, school district officials may release student information (name, grade, photograph, address, academic interest, artwork, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, terms of school attendance and graduation, awards received, and future educational plans) for use in school district publications and within district Web sites and district social media sites, or to the media for public relations purposes. Parents who object to the release of their child's information and/or photograph should notify both their child's building principal and the district's communications office in writing on or before September 15 of the upcoming school year.

Conduct On School Property

The Guilderland Central School District expects a high standard of conduct from its students, faculty and support staff, as well as visitors to the schools. The school will enforce a Code of Conduct which governs the conduct of all persons, whether or not their presence is authorized, upon any premises or property under the control of the district and used in its teaching, administrative, cultural, recreational, athletic, and other programs and activities.

No person, either alone or with others, shall engage in the following:

- Willfully injure any other person or threaten to do so
- Willfully damage or remove district property
- Disrupt the orderly conduct of classes, school programs or other school activities
- Distribute or wear materials on school grounds which appear obscene, which

advocate illegal action,discriminate against race,nationality, religion, or sexual orientation, appear libelous, disruptive to the school program or obstruct the rights of others

- Intimidate, harass, or discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age or disability
- Enter upon any portion of the school premises without authorization or remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed
- Obstruct the free movement of any person in any place to which these rules apply
- Violate traffic laws, parking regulations or other restrictions on vehicles
- Possess, consume, sell,distribute or exchange alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, or be under the influence of either on school property or at any school-related function
- Smoke or use tobacco on district property
- Possess or use firearms and/or other weapons, including air guns, pistols, rifles,shotguns, ammunition, explosives, box cutters, knives, gas canisters, pepper spray or other noxious spray in or on school property (except in the case of law enforcement officers or except as specifically authorized by the school district)
- Loiter on or about school buildings or ground;
- Gamble on school premises
- Refuse to comply with any lawful order of an identifiable school district official acting in the performance of his or her duties
- Willfully incite others to commit any of the acts herein prohibited
- Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance, or Board policy

Penalties

Anyone who violates any of the provisions of these rules is subject to appropriate penalties, up to and including reprimand, suspension, ejection, arrest, and/or prosecution.

Public Complaints

Most often, parental complaints and concerns can be addressed simply through a telephone call or a conference with the teacher. If the matter is not settled satisfactorily, the complaint should be directed to the Building Principal and, if necessary, to the Superintendent.

Complaints regarding district programs, instructional or library materials, operations and/or staff members, should be directed to the Building Principal. If the matter is not satisfactorily settled, the complaint should be directed to the Superintendent, whenever possible. Additional information can also be found in Board Policy 1400, available in the Principal's or the Superintendent's office.

Some complaints may require different procedures. Any school office or the Superintendent's office can provide information regarding specific processes to be followed for making a complaint. Additional information can also be found in Board Policy 1400, available in the Principal's or the Superintendent's Office.

Child Abuse in an Educational Setting

Students have the right to an educational setting that does not threaten their physical and emotional health and development. Child abuse by school personnel and school volunteers violates this right and therefore is strictly prohibited. Parents who believe that their child has been abused by employees or volunteers of the district should immediately notify the Building Principal of their child's school. The appropriate law enforcement authorities will be notified if there is reasonable suspicion that an act of child abuse has occurred. The parent of the alleged child victim will be promptly notified when someone other than the parent submits a report of alleged child abuse in an educational setting.